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Free to Deployed Areas

SHIFTING STRATEGY



New counterinsurgency manual tries to take commanders beyond Iraq and Afghanistan

Above: Marine Corps Cpl. Andrew Crisp interviews an Afghan man during Operation Grizzly in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

ALEJANDRO PENA
Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Lessons learned the hard way in Afghanistan and Iraq are part of a new U.S. Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency field manual that emphasizes how to prevent insurgencies as well as fight them.

The document, due for release next month, updates a 2006 version of the manual, developed by retired Army general and former commander of U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan David Petraeus.

Unlike the old manual, which laid out the tactics that Petraeus implemented with some success in Iraq, the new one will give

soldiers counterinsurgency tools that can be used anywhere in the world, according to Clint Ancker, director of the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

"The previous manual had a lot about tribal politics," he said. "This takes a much broader approach."

The new manual is focused on

future insurgencies, Ancker said.

"One of our real challenges as we go back to regain some of our atrophied combat capabilities (as troops withdraw from Afghanistan) is not to lose these counterinsurgency capabilities we have gained in the past decade," he said.

SEE STRATEGY ON PAGE 3

Pro-Russia insurgents refuse to back down

BY PETER LEONARD
AND NATALIYA VASILYEVA
The Associated Press

DONETSK, Ukraine — Dashing hopes of progress raised by a diplomatic deal in Geneva, pro-Russian insurgents who have occupied government buildings in more than 10 Ukrainian cities

UKRAINE UNREST

said Friday they will not leave them until the country's interim government resigns.

Denis Pushilin, of the self-appointed Donetsk People's Republic, told reporters the insurgents do not recognize the Ukrain-

ian government as legitimate.

Ukraine and Russia agreed Thursday in Geneva to take tentative steps toward calming tensions along their shared border after weeks of conflict since Ukraine's former leader fled to Russia in February and Russia annexed Crimea in March.

SEE INSURGENTS ON PAGE 8



A combat vehicle carrying pro-Russian gunmen passes through downtown Sloviansk, eastern Ukraine, on Friday.

EREN LUKATSK/AP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's sad to have a defendant who knows the facilities and knows which ones to go to."

— Judge Sharon Johnson Coleman, after sentencing Walter Unbehaun, 74, to prison for robbing a suburban Chicago bank, and agreeing to recommend that he be sent to the facility of his choice

See story on Page 6

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MILITARY

Top NCO hails Afghan air force ops

By SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN AIR BASE, Germany — The Afghan air force's operations in support of presidential elections this month show that the service is making quick progress as the pullout of most foreign troops nears, the U.S. Air Force's top enlisted man said Friday.

"I think you can use the election to show how much they have progressed and taken the lead" in flying operations, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody said.

Afghan pilots flew numerous helicopter missions throughout the country ahead of and after the April 5 elections, carrying officials and ballot boxes to remote locations.

The elections generally were seen as very successful because of the high turnout by voters who defied Taliban threats. The electoral process, which likely will continue with a run-off ballot, is expected to result in the first democratic transition of power in the country's history. President Hamid Karzai is constitutionally barred from running again.

Cody said American and other foreign airmen working directly with their Afghan counterparts are very enthusiastic about their recent progress and their high morale. "They are determined to build up the ability to sustain themselves on their own," he said during a stopover at Ramstein after a weeklong visit to Afghanistan.

"They're plugged in, they really know what's going on [and they] really see that the Afghan forces have stepped up and are making tremendous progress."

Still, he added, everyone realizes that it's impossible to develop a highly effective air component in such a short time period.

"It's a very large undertaking. But if you saw what we saw, you'd be very impressed."

Because of Afghanistan's rugged terrain and sparse road network, development of a capable air force is seen as vital to support army ground operations and to provide medical evacuations. Still, Afghanistan isn't expected to have an independent and fully functioning air force until about



SLOBODAN LEKIC/Stars and Stripes

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody talks about the capabilities of the Afghan air force after arriving Thursday at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, from a trip to Afghanistan.

"I think you can use the election to show how much they have progressed and taken the lead" in flying operations."

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Cody

2017, well after the withdrawal of NATO combat troops at the end of this year.

Currently, the Afghan air force numbers more than 6,000 personnel, including pilots who flew for the pro-Soviet regime in the 1980s and newly trained pilots. Plans call for the service to expand to 8,000 members within the next two years.

The London-based Royal United Services Institute, a military and security think tank, found that while army and police have made significant progress in the past five years — now holding

their own against the insurgency — development of an air force has lagged.

"As in Iraq, a functioning air force is proving the most challenging independent military capability to build and sustain. Yet this may prove vital to maintaining current success on the ground," RUSI said in a report last month.

Recent history offers cautionary lessons for the air force. When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the air force was powerful and well-trained, with about 400 aircraft,

including jet fighter-bombers and helicopter gunships. However, within three years it had collapsed because of maintenance and resupply problems.

Much of the Afghan air force's problems are due to the fact that many recruits have limited ability to read and write. While illiteracy is also rife in the ground components, in the air service it has resulted in serious problems in maintaining and operating aircraft.

Military officials expect foreign air force advisers to remain in Afghanistan for at least two or three more years as part of a follow-on training mission after combat troops leave at the end of this year — if, that is, the country's new leader signs status-of-forces agreements with the United States and NATO.

lekic.slobodan@stripes.com

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MIDEAST

Special operations suicides at record pace

By HOWARD ALTMAN
Tampa (Fla.) Tribune

Special operations troops are taking their own lives at a record pace, said Adm. William McRaven, commander U.S. Special Operations Command, headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base.

Repeating a concern he first raised to Congress in February, McRaven told a symposium in Tampa Thursday that helping the troops and their families is "my No. 1 priority."

"The last two years have been the highest rate of suicides we have had in the special operations community and this year I am sure we are on the path to break that," McRaven said during his keynote speech to the GEOINT 2013+ Symposium at the Tampa Convention Center. "And although suicides alone are not an indica-

tion of the health of the force, they are a component I have to look at. There is a lot of angst. There is a lot of pressure out there. My soldiers have been fighting for 12-13 years in hard combat. Hard combat. And anybody who has spent any time in this war has been changed by it. It's that simple."

Just how much is yet to be known, said McRaven.

"I don't think we know what effects are going to happen," he said. "I don't think that will begin to manifest itself after two years or so, maybe two, three years."

McRaven did not say how many commandos have committed suicide nor did he provide that information during his February testimony to Congress. His press office did not have those figures then or Thursday.

There are about 60,000 special

operations troops, with a presence in more than 80 countries.

"I know a couple of my friends in the community who have committed suicide in the past year," said Marine Staff Sgt. Michael Compton, 30, assigned to Marine Special Operations Command at Camp Lejeune. "It is a systematic plague going on."

Under McRaven's Preservation of the Force and Family program, Socom "is responding with a holistic approach that takes into account every factor that might contribute to this challenge," including "the psychological, social, spiritual, and physical factors that are known to contribute to suicide," said spokesman Ken McGraw.

Among other initiatives, the command created a suicide prevention working group in 2012,

said McGraw and followed that up with a Suicide Prevention Task Force in January.

The task force "is comprised of subject matter experts, clergy, behavioral health professionals, servicemembers who have experienced suicidal ideation, spouses of servicemembers who have committed suicide and other personnel that are closely linked to this challenge," said McGraw. They are also looking at Pentagon, VA and civilian programs like peer-to-peer counseling and mentoring solutions, said McGraw.

For the close-knit commando community used to operating in small groups, "peer education and counseling is key in suicide prevention, coupled with access to confidential, efficient, short-term interventions by trusted clinical entities," said Carrie Elk,

the founder of the Elk Institute for Psychological Health & Performance in Tampa and a therapist who works frequently with operators in crisis around the country.

McRaven said the treatment of troops and veterans has changed for the positive since 1977, when he joined the Navy. But it's still not enough.

"We didn't do a very good job as a nation of taking care of veterans coming back from Vietnam," he said. "We are not going to make that mistake this time around. We are going to put everything we can to making sure we are taking care of these kids and their families. So that becomes my No. 1 priority."

More than a thousand intelligence and military professionals and defense contractors stood up and gave McRaven the symposium's loudest applause.

Strategy: Manual outlines ways to forestall insurgency

FROM FRONT PAGE

The Army and the Marine Corps are re-focusing on the skills they'd need to defeat a conventional force armed with advanced weapons such as tanks and artillery rather than the lightly armed guerrilla fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The new manual provides a broad overview of the counterinsurgency strategy. Six follow-up publications will explain specific techniques that can be used by troops in the field, he said.

The manual stresses the importance of understanding the strategic context, the local culture and the operational environment associated with an insurgency.

In addition to lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan, it draws on experiences — British forces battling communists in Malaya in the 1950s and Americans in Vietnam and Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s — that were a feature of the "Petraeus" manual, he said.

The new manual deals with "clear and hold" operations, such as those used in Iraq and Afghanistan to remove insurgents and to win the support of the people for the government, but it also looks at approaches designed to forestall insurgencies, Ancker said.

For example, it talks about "generational engagement" — targeting local young people to try to understand their needs to forestall an insurgency, he said.

That's the sort of thing that U.S. personnel are likely to pass on to foreign troops during exercises with America's friends and allies. Post-Afghanistan, U.S. troops will spend more time in other countries where there is the potential for insurgencies, he said.

"Regionally aligned brigades will build capacity of partner nations both to deal with insurgencies but also to prevent them from occurring," Ancker said. "We would expect them to be looking at this manual when they are deploying."

The new manual will help U.S. troops teach foreign soldiers to thwart insurgent threats, to defeat improvised explosive devices and to mitigate civilian casualties during an insurgency, he said.



U.S. Marines interview three Afghan men during counterinsurgency operations in July 2013 in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

"We are probably not going to train people specifically on counterinsurgency on a large scale."

Clint Ancker

Director of the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Some topics that were covered in the old manual, such as logistics and ethics, are left out of the new version, Ancker said.

Some of that information is covered by other new manuals, and ethics has been the subject of an Army campaign following questionable behavior by a large group of high-ranking officers, including Petraeus, who resigned from his post as Central Intelligence Agency director in 2012 after an extramarital affair.

The Army and the Marine Corps won't train leaders to be experts in every sort of operation. Instead, they will make information about things such as counterinsurgency strategies available and let leaders know how to get it, he said.

"We are probably not going to train peo-

ple specifically on counterinsurgency on a large scale," he said. "Certainly not at the level that we did in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Subject to Marine and Army commanders' approval, the manual will be released late next month and will be made available to the public at the Army Publishing Directorate's website, dap.army.mil.

However, David Johnson, a former Army lieutenant colonel who is executive director of the Center for Advanced Defense Studies in Washington, said there's debate over whether a counterinsurgency manual has any place in the thought process of a non-empire or colony-holding power.

"A more useful military manual might be one that addresses 'counter-unconventional warfare,'" he said. "This would focus legitimate efforts to stop a foreign-sponsored insurgency in a friendly nation."

Counterinsurgency in other countries isn't America's job, said Johnson, who warned that U.S. support for a government engaged in such a conflict might undermine its standing in the eyes of its people.

"If a ... government refuses to address the legitimate concerns of their people ... there may be nothing a U.S. effort can or should do to ensure the survival of the government."

robert.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @sethrobsont

Taliban chief's detention mars peace talks

By KEVIN SIEFF
The Washington Post

KABUL — A top Taliban commander in the midst of peace negotiations with the Afghan government has been detained in the United Arab Emirates, according to Afghan officials, which thwarts long-term reconciliation efforts between insurgents and President Hamid Karzai's government.

Agha Jan Motasim, the Taliban's former finance minister, was taken from his family's home by Emirati authorities about a month ago, Afghan officials said, just as Karzai's government was growing optimistic about a breakthrough in peace talks.

"Known and secret enemies of peace in Afghanistan continue sabotaging our peace process," said Aimal Faizi, a spokesman for Karzai.

Emirati officials declined to comment on Motasim's arrest.

U.S. officials raised doubts about Motasim's role as a prominent peace negotiator, saying his ties to the Taliban leadership had faded in recent years. U.S. officials added the Motasim's arrest was unrelated to his role as a peace negotiator.

But Afghan officials say Motasim was the best chance Afghanistan had at a peace deal. In recent years, he had held meetings with current and former Taliban members, expressing hope for the peace process. He gave interviews to international media outlets to broadcast his plans for reconciliation to a wide audience.

In the UAE, Afghan officials said, Motasim proved particularly helpful agreeing to meet with Afghan emissaries in March and attempting to recruit high-level members of the Taliban to the peace process.

But he had been detached from Taliban leaders — first in Turkey where he identified himself as an emissary from the organization and then in the UAE. Many Western officials questioned his Taliban bona fides, even as Karzai seemed to invest in Motasim's ability to put an end to the insurgency.

For years, one of the biggest hurdles to reconciliation efforts has been finding Taliban negotiating partners who are perceived as legitimate by the group's leadership in Pakistan.

MILITARY

Yokosuka sailor charged in Navy bribery scandal

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A Yokosuka sailor was arrested and then was arraigned Thursday on bribery charges in San Diego for his suspected role in the Navy's widening Asia-Pacific scandal over the trade of classified information in exchange for cash and gifts.

Petty Officer 1st Class Dan Layug, 27, last assigned to Yokosuka's Fleet Logistics Center, is the fourth Navy official and the first enlisted sailor to be arrested as part of the investigation of Glenn Defense Marine Asia, a contractor that has provided port services to Navy ships for more than 25 years.

According to the federal court complaint filed this week against him, Layug used his position as a logistics specialist to gain access to U.S. Navy ship schedules — some of which were classified — and other internal information, and provided this information to GDMA's vice president of global operations. In exchange, court records allege, GDMA provided Layug with regular monthly pay-

ments, some of which were delivered in envelopes of cash.

Layug appeared in federal court and was released on \$100,000 bail, subject to GPS monitoring, according to a statement from the United States Attorney's Office in San Diego.

GDMA owner Leonard Glenn Francis, known to associates as "Fat Leonard," and another GDMA officer have also been arrested since last year under allegations that they provided cash, prostitutes and other gifts to Navy officials in exchange for classified information.

Layug first began sending classified ship schedules, sometimes referred to as "golfing schedules," to GDMA employees in 2010, when Layug served aboard the 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge. The following year, he helped arrange fuel replenishments for ship visiting Thailand and Russia, according to the court complaint.

Court documents allege that GDMA overbilled the Navy by millions of dollars for fuel at various "port calls" where GDMA had favorable connections.

Layug last sent pricing infor-

mation for a competitor to GDMA, then followed up in an email with a question: "What are the chances of getting the new iPad 3? Let me know," according to court documents. Messages between a GDMA officer and Francis confirmed that they would purchase the Apple iPad for Layug, according to the court complaint.

By late 2012, GDMA agreed to pay Layug \$1,000 per month, according to court documents.

Layug received his payments in envelopes full of cash, often providing ship schedules upon receipt, according to the court complaint.

Soon after he began receiving the cash, Layug's wife opened a bank account for their 9-month-old daughter at Navy Federal Credit Union. Within a few months, Layug's daughter had more than \$3,000 to her name, according to credit union records cited in the complaint.

Layug's wife was aware of GDMA's payments, openly discussing them in an email to Layug's official Navy email account, the complaint alleged. She has not been charged in the case.

In 2013, Layug asked GDMA for



Courtesy of the Navy League of the United States, Singapore Council

Former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughhead, left, stands with Leonard Glenn Francis, the man suspected of being behind the ever-expanding Navy bribery scandal involving prostitutes and luxury travel. Roughhead has not been implicated in the case.

luxury accommodations for four other enlisted sailors at port visits in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea, according to court documents. He also asked for new cameras, phones and computers before sending classified Navy ship schedules, according to court documents.

Layug's arrest marks the first time since the GDMA scandal broke in September 2013 that a lower-level sailor has been implicated.

Cmdr. Michael Vannak Khem Misiewicz, a captain-select who commanded USS Mustin and later served as deputy operations officer aboard the USS Blue Ridge for the Yokosuka-based U.S. 7th Fleet, was the first Navy officer arrested. Cmdr. Jose Luis

Sanchez also has been charged. Vice Adm. Ted Branch, Rear Adm. Bruce Loveless and former USS Bonhomme Richard commander Capt. Daniel Dusek are all under investigation in relation to the scandal but have not been charged, Navy officials have stated. The allegations leveled at the two admirals involve "inappropriate conduct" prior to their current ranks, officials said in December.

On December 17, 2013, Naval Criminal Investigative Service supervisory special agent John Bertrand Beliveau II, 44, pleaded guilty to bribery charges for regularly tipping off Francis to the status of the government's investigation into GDMA.

slavin.erik@stripes.com
Twitter: @eslavin_stripes



ARN YOUNG-JOON/AP

U.S. soldiers gather Friday after a live-firing drill at the Army's Rodriguez range in Pocheon, South Korea. The drill was part of the annual Foal Eagle military training by the U.S. and South Korea.

US, S. Korea wrap up Foal Eagle joint training

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. and South Korea quietly wrapped up their annual spring training drills on Friday, as the end of the massive Foal Eagle exercise was overshadowed by efforts to rescue passengers of a sunken ferry of the southwestern tip of the peninsula.

Some 12,700 U.S. troops took part in either the Foal Eagle field training exercise, which began Feb. 24 and ended Friday, or the Key Resolve command post exercise, which ran Feb. 24-March 6. About 200,000 South Korean troops participated.

This year's Foal Eagle exercise included the Ssang Yong amphibious landing, which, according to South Korean media reports, involved some 9,500 U.S. Forces and 4,500 South Korean sailors and marines.

A 7th Fleet ship that took part in Ssang Yong responded Wednesday to the sinking of the Sewol, a South Korean ferry carrying 475 passengers, nearly 270 of whom remain missing. The USS Bonhomme Richard was conducting routine maritime operations in the Yellow Sea when the sinking took place, and MH-60 helicopters aboard the ship have been taking part in search-and-rescue operations.

The spring exercises are traditionally a time of heightened tension with North Korea, which routinely criticizes the drills as being provocative in nature. During this year's exercises, the North conducted several rocket and ballistic missile launches and the two Koreas on March 31 fired hundreds of shells across their disputed maritime border.

F-35 production's projected cost surges to \$398.6B

By TONY CAPACCIO
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The projected cost to develop and produce Lockheed Martin Corp.'s F-35 fighter, the Pentagon's costliest weapons system, has risen 19 percent in the past year to \$398.6 billion, according to estimates released Thursday.

The \$74 billion increase from \$391.2 billion includes the aircraft and the engines produced by United Technologies Corp.'s Pratt & Whitney unit for an eventual fleet of 2,443 U.S. planes. At the same time, the Pentagon's independent cost-assessment office said its estimate for operating and supporting the F-35 over its projected 55-year service life has declined \$96.8 bil-

lion, or 8.7 percent, to \$1.02 trillion from \$1.11 trillion.

The latest F-35 projection is among annual cost estimates for major weapons that the Pentagon sent to Congress Thursday. The reports cover a portfolio of 77 weapons the Pentagon projects will cost a combined \$1.12 trillion, down from \$1.66 trillion for 78 programs in last year's com-

parison of Selected Acquisition Reports.

The increased cost of making the F-35 stems from revised labor rates for Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed and its subcontractors, a rise in engine production costs and adjusted forecasts for foreign exchange rates against the dollar, the Defense Department said in a statement. The cost

of the airframe program rose \$3.1 billion, while the engines' price increased by \$4.3 billion.

The rising cost may give pause to other countries as they weigh whether to buy the F-35 or how many to acquire. Among eight original international partners, Italy, Turkey and Canada already have indicated that they are re-evaluating their plans.

NATION

CBO says deficits in Obama's budget higher than claimed

By Andrew Taylor
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A report released Thursday by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says President Barack Obama's budget request would mean significantly larger budget deficits than the White House claims.

CBO says the budget plan proposed last month by Obama would produce deficits of \$6.6 trillion during the next 10 years \$1.6 trillion more than the White House estimates.

The main reason is that the White House has a rosier estimate of the economy's performance over the decade than CBO. That means the administration predicts higher tax revenues.

The president's budget is just a proposal; it has gained little traction on Capitol Hill since its release last month. The GOP-controlled House and Democratic-led Senate already have settled on a spending "cap" for this year's round of annual spending bills. A budget debate last week in the House was about political messaging and left intact last year's small-bore congressional budget deal.

CBO also says Obama's budget contains \$1.4 trillion in tax increases over a decade, much

more than claimed by the White House. A \$456 billion chunk of that comes from higher revenues because of an influx of workers through immigration reform. CBO also notes that Obama's budget contains \$193 billion over a decade in new tax credits for the working poor that officially are counted as spending because they're issued as refunds.

Obama also proposes steeper estate taxes, curbing tax deductions claimed by the wealthy and a 94-cent-per-pack increase in cigarette taxes. It proposes more money for infrastructure projects, education, job training and the Pentagon than permitted under automatic budget cuts known as sequestration. Those cuts are required because Congress failed to follow up on a 2011 budget and deal with significant further spending cuts that could undo the automatic cuts.

Obama's budget claims to reduce cumulative deficits by \$2.2 trillion over 10 years, predicting they would drop from \$7.1 to \$4.9 trillion.

CBO's estimate says Obama's budget, if enacted in its entirety, would cut deficits only by about \$1 trillion during that period when compared with current law.

Advice to Democrats: Don't say 'recovery'

By David Espo
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Election-year memo to Democratic candidates: Don't talk about the economic recovery. It's a political loser.

So say Democratic strategists in a blunt declaration that is blunt talk skipper "how much trouble people are in, and doesn't convince them that policymakers really understand or are even focusing on the problems they continue to face."

In addition, Stan Greenberg, James Carville and others wrote this in head-to-head polling tests, the mere mention of the word "recovery" is trumped by a Republican assertion that the Obama administration has had six years to get the economy moving and its policies haven't worked.

Coincidentally or not, Democrats have largely shelved the "R" word.

President Barack Obama's only utterance of it in recent weeks was on April 8, and it was in the context of accusing Republicans of blocking progress on issues that "would help with the economic recovery and help us grow faster."

Additionally, at a news conference on March 26 in which they announced a campaign-season

agenda, neither Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., nor most of the other five lawmakers present uttered the word "recovery."

The strategic advice comes at a time Democrats are working to maximize turnout, particularly among women, for the fall elections, when they face a determined challenge from Republicans trying to add control of the Senate to their seemingly secure House majority.

Simultaneously, Democrats are struggling to respond effectively to persistent Republican attacks on the nation's health care law.

Turnout in midterm elections is customarily lower than in a presidential campaign. This year, numerous polls indicate that Democrats, particularly women, are less motivated to go to the polls than Republicans who are eager to demonstrate opposition to "Obamacare," or the Affordable Care Act.

In their memo for Democracy Corps and the Women's Voices Women Vote Action Fund, the authors propose that to boost turnout among their target groups, Democrats should back an economic agenda that "puts working women first," and says that incomes are soaring only for CEOs and the top 1 percent of the country.



SUSAN WALSH/AP

President Barack Obama speaks Thursday in the briefing room of the White House in Washington.

Late sign-ups improve outlook for health law

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldívar
and Josh Lederman
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A surge of eleventh-hour enrollments has improved the outlook for President Barack Obama's health care law, with more people signing up overall and a much-needed spark of interest among young adults.

Nonetheless, Obama's announcement Thursday that 8 million have signed up for subsidized private insurance, and that 35 percent of them are younger than 35, is just a peek at what might be going on with the nation's newest social program.

Still to be announced is what share of those enrolled were previously uninsured — the true test of Obama's Affordable Care Act — and how many actually secured coverage by paying their first month's premiums.

"This thing is working," a confident Obama said of his signature domestic achievement. The days of website woes and canceled policies seemed far behind.

State-by-state statistics, expected as early as next week, will provide a much fuller picture.

A key question is how many of those signed up were younger adults, those between the ages of 18 and 34. They're the health care overhaul's most coveted demographic because they're healthier than older adults and their premiums can help cross-subsidize care for the sick. That would help hold down future premium increases.

According to the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, adults 18 to 34 represent about 40 percent of the people eligible to buy coverage in the health care law's new insurance markets. The White

House says that group now accounts for 28 percent of those who have picked plans in states where the federal government is running the insurance exchanges.

Not perfect, but not bad either, said Larry Levitt, an insurance expert with Kaiser.

"Enrollment among young adults ended up lower than their share of the target population but sufficient to keep the market stable in the vast majority of the country," he said.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office is forecasting only a slight average increase in premiums for 2015. Some private insurance experts expect big differences around the country, predicting that insurers will seek noticeably higher premiums, between 6 percent and 8 percent on average.

Republicans were having none of Obama's celebration. A statement from the office of Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said he remains committed to repealing the law and replacing it.

The president appeared in the White House briefing room to trumpet the new figures, which beat initial projections by 1 million people.

Following the disastrous rollout of the insurance exchanges in October, when HealthCare.gov was virtually unusable, Democrats have been hoping that higher-than-expected results could help their candidates reclaim the political high ground ahead of the midterm elections.

Seven months out from Election Day, they're seeking to turn the page on the law's flawed debut — a strategy underscored last week when Obama announced that Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who became the face of the rollout failure, was stepping down.

Polling shows the law remains unpopular in much of the country, yet most Americans say they don't expect it to be entirely repealed, but changed in some way.

With the insurance markets looking increasingly viable, Obama and Democrats were hoping to move the political debate away from repeal and toward efforts to fix lingering issues.

Republicans have been reluctant to pursue fixes for fear of tacitly embracing the overall law. Obama said that it's "absolutely possible" to make improvements but that it would require a change of attitude from Republicans.

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NATION

3 more mudslide victims identified

By GENE JOHNSON
The Associated Press

OSO, Wash. — Authorities have identified three more bodies pulled from the debris of the mudslide that swept through the Washington town of Oso last month as crews dig through the devastation with a swarm of excavators.

All 39 victims recovered have been identified, the Snohomish County medical examiner's office said Thursday, and four names remain on the list of the missing.

The latest victims identified are Wyatt M. Ruthven, 4, of Arlington; Sandra K. Miller, 64, of Everett; and Ronald P. Dequillettes, 52, of Arlington. All died of multiple blunt force injuries.

The March 22 slide buried dozens of homes in the community 55 miles northeast of Seattle. Steady rain Thursday complicated the search and recovery effort, and officials worried about rising water from the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River.

A steady run of dump trucks Wednesday piled tons of crushed rock to raise the height of a 3,000-foot-long berm constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has allowed workers to pump water out of a main search



TED S. WARREN/AP

A dog helps search a pile of debris Wednesday in Oso, Wash., the site of a massive deadly mudslide on March 22. The area being searched is only recently accessible due to work done to divert water from the slide area.

area and separate it from the river.

Nearly an inch of rain was expected on top of about 2 inches that had fallen since Tuesday night, said Gary Schneider, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Seattle.

The pool behind the mudslide has risen about a foot and was expected to rise 2 more feet before cresting Thursday night, he said. That could come close to spilling

over the berm.

The rain adds to the agonizing mess for hundreds of workers searching the debris for bodies and starting to clear a mile-long stretch of Highway 530 covered up to 25 feet deep. Crews have been able to clear only about 100 feet of the highway each day, said Koreena Haynes, a spokeswoman for the incident command.

The state Transportation Department has been telling resi-

dents in meetings this week it could be fall before the highway is cleared, repaired and reopened. In the meantime, officials may allow residents with "passports" to use a service road that has been restricted to emergency crews.

Officials also are preparing for President Barack Obama's visit to the site on Tuesday. He plans to survey the damage and meet with victims and emergency responders.

Adult stem cells cloned

By ARIANA EUNJUNG CHA
The Washington Post

Scientists have grown stem cells from adults using cloning techniques for the first time — bringing them closer to developing patient-specific lines of cells that can be used to treat a whole host of ailments, from heart disease to blindness.

The research, described in Thursday's online edition of the journal *Cell Stem Cell*, is a controversial advance likely to reopen the debate over the ethics of human cloning.

The scientists' technique was similar to the one used in the first clone of a mammal, Dolly the sheep, which was created in 1996.

They "reprogrammed" an egg cell by removing its DNA and replacing it with that of an adult donor. Scientists then zapped the cell with electricity, which made it divide and multiply. The resulting cells were identical in DNA to the donor.

The first success in humans was reported last year by scientists at the Oregon Health & Science University and the Oregon National Primate Research Center. But they used donor cells from infants. In this study, the cells came from two men, a 35-year-old and a 75-year-old.

Paul Knoepfler, an associate professor at the University of California at Davis who studies stem cells, called the new research "exciting, important, and technically convincing."

"In theory you could use those stem cells to produce almost any kind of cell and give it back to a person as a therapy," he said.

In their paper, Young Gie Chung, from the Research Institute for Stem Cell Research for CHA Health Systems in Los Angeles; Robert Lanza, from Advanced Cell Technology in Marlborough, Mass.; and their co-authors emphasized the promise of the technology for new therapies. What they didn't mention — but was clear to those working with stem cells — was that their work was also an important discovery of human cloning.

While the research published Thursday involves cells that are technically early stage embryos, the intention is not to try to grow them into a fully formed human. However the techniques, in theory, could be a first step toward creating a baby with the same genetic makeup as a donor.

Chelsea Clinton announces pregnancy

From wire reports

NEW YORK — Chelsea Clinton announced Thursday that she and her husband are expecting their first child this year.

In a surprise announcement, Clinton, 34, said she and husband Marc Mezvinsky, are "very excited" and "lucky" to welcome a child into their family.

"I just hope that I will be as good a mom to my child and hopefully children as my mom was to me," said Clinton, as her mother, former secretary of state Hill-

ary Rodham Clinton, looked on proudly. A Clinton spokesman said the baby is due this fall.

The pregnancy coincides with Hillary Clinton's deliberations about a second presidential campaign in 2016, when she would be the overwhelming favorite for the Democratic nomination.

Thursday's announcement came at the conclusion of a forum, moderated by actress and activist America Ferrera at the Lower Eastside Girls Club, promoting young women's empowerment.



TED SHAFFER/AP

In this image taken from video, Chelsea Clinton addresses the audience at a New York conference Thursday with her mother, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. Chelsea Clinton announced that she is pregnant with her first child at the event.

74-year-old ex-con gets his wish — a return to prison

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — An ex-con who spent most of his adult life behind bars on Thursday got what he said he wanted for robbing a suburban Chicago bank. The 74-year-old gets to go back to the place he called home — prison.

Telling Walter Unbehaun he frightened a teller by showing her a revolver tucked in his waistband during the 2013 heist, a federal judge imposed a 3½-year prison

sentence, citing a rap sheet that includes crimes from home invasion to kidnapping.

"This is not the first time you've inspired fear," Judge Sharon Johnson Coleman said, scolding the high-school dropout and part-time bathtub repairman.

Unbehaun gripped a cane as he hobbled to a podium to make a brief statement. "My crime is bad, there ain't no doubt," he said calmly. "I just wanna be like everybody else."

Boredom and loneliness, defense filings said, had partly led Unbehaun to conclude that a life on the inside was preferable to life outside.

Last year, he walked into the bank with a cane but no disguise, displayed the loaded gun and told the teller, "I don't want to hurt you."

His record includes more than half a dozen convictions, including — ironically — for escaping from prison.

As the hearing ended, Unbehaun requested that he be sent to FCI Greenville prison in southern Illinois, walking Judge Coleman through the various benefits of the facility, including good work programs.

Coleman agreed to recommend that prison. She then shook her head.

"It's sad," she said, "to have a defendant who knows the facilities and knows which ones to go to."

NATION

Husband convicted in Iraqi woman's death

The Associated Press

EL CAJON, Calif. — A jury convicted an Iraqi immigrant Thursday of bludgeoning his wife to death in a case that was initially considered a hate crime.

Kassim Alhimidi, 49, shook his head from side to side as the verdict was read and chaos erupted in the courtroom as his oldest son stood and shouted obscenities. Alhimidi turned and yelled in Arabic. The son struggled with officers as he was removed.

The judge and the jury also left the courtroom before the hearing could conclude.

According to the official courtroom translator, Alhimidi shouted, "God knows, and I attest to God, that I am not the killer. I am innocent."

After a brief recess the judge returned and scheduled sentencing for May 15.

Alhimidi faces a maximum sentence of life in prison for the mur-

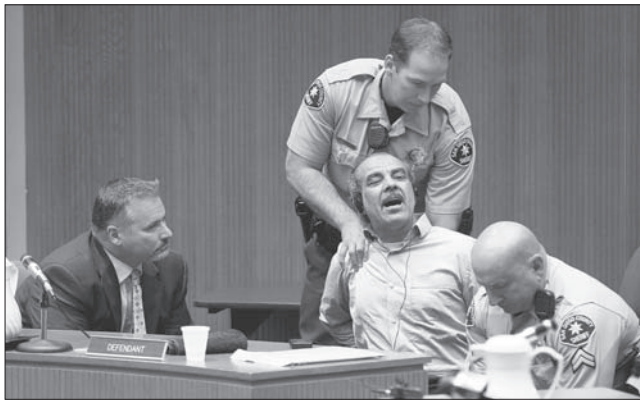
der of his wife, Shaima Alawadi, 32, at their house in El Cajon.

Prosecutors argued Alhimidi lied to police about his troubled marriage and apologized to his wife as she lay dying in a hospital. Defense lawyers said Alhimidi loved his wife, that he was not a violent man, and that he returned from Iraq after burying his wife there.

The couple's eldest daughter, then 17, found her mother in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor of their suburban San Diego home in March 2012, her body tangled in a computer cord and desk chair. She had multiple skull fractures from blunt force and died two days after the attack. A sliding glass door was shattered.

No murder weapon was found, but investigators said Alawadi a strict Muslim, was apparently beaten with a tire iron.

Local and federal investigators first suspected a hate crime after a note was found near the



JOHN GASTALDO, POOL/AP

Kassim Alhimidi reacts to being found guilty for the murder of his wife Shaima Alawadi on Thursday.

body that read: "This is my country, go back to yours, you terrorist." Lab tests determined the note was a photocopy, possibly of a note found outside the family home a week earlier by one of

the couple's five children.

Prosecutors told the San Diego County jury that Alhimidi was distraught over his wife's plans to leave him. Detectives found documents in Alawadi's car indicating

she planned to seek a divorce.

After the attack, Alhimidi went to the hospital, touched his wife as she lay unconscious in bed, and apologized to her, prosecutor Kurt Mechals said.

Police look at pot's role in murder of Denver wife

The Associated Press

DENVER — A Denver man accused of killing his wife while she was on the phone with a 911 dispatcher ate marijuana-infused candy before the attack, according to search warrants released Thursday.

Denver police are investigating if the pot influenced his behavior and also whether officers responded quickly enough to pleas for help from the woman, who was shot to death 12 minutes into the 911 call she made Monday.

Officials said Thursday that a dispatcher has been placed on paid leave during the investigation.

Kristine Kirk, 44, told dispatchers her husband bought and ate the marijuana candy and may have also taken prescription pain pills before he started hallucinating and frightening the couple's three children, the warrants state.

She pleaded with dispatchers to hurry and send officers because



AP photos

Authorities investigate a homicide at the home of Richard and Kristine Kirk in Denver, above, on Tuesday. Richard Kirk, right, is being held in the death of his wife.

her husband, Richard Kirk, 47, had asked her to get a gun and shoot him. She said he was talking about the end of the world and she was "scared of what he might do."

Richard Kirk could be heard in the background of the 911 call talking about the candy he legally bought from one of Denver's pot dispensaries earlier that night, and surveillance footage from the shop captured the transaction, police said.

A detective who interviewed

Richard Kirk after the killing noted that he appeared to be on drugs, based on his speech and inability to focus, according to the warrants. Police said he was rambling and confessed to killing his wife.

Investigators were analyzing blood samples to see whether he was under the influence of any other substances.

Richard Kirk does not remember anything of the incident, his brother, Lance Kirk, told KUSA-TV Thursday.

Marijuana a likely factor in Colo. student's fatal fall

The Associated Press

DENVER — A Wyoming college student who jumped to his death from a Denver hotel balcony ate more than the recommended serving of a marijuana cookie, police reports show.

Levy Thamba Pongi, 19, consumed a little more than one cookie after his girlfriend legally purchased four of the pot edibles at a shop in downtown Denver — even though a store clerk told her to cut one cookie into six pieces and eat just one piece at a time, according to the reports obtained Thursday.

Back at their hotel, the group of four friends followed the instructions, but when Pongi felt nothing after about 30 minutes, he ate an entire cookie, police said.

Pongi started acting strangely 15 to 30 minutes later, speaking erratically in French, shaking, screaming and throwing things around the hotel room.

This is a sign from God that this has happened, that I can't control myself," he told his friends, according to the reports. "It's not because of the weed."

Pongi's friends tried to restrain him before he left the room and jumped over a fourth floor railing into the hotel lobby, police said.

An autopsy report from the March 11 incident lists marijuana intoxication as a "significant contributing factor" in the death.

Authorities have said the friends, all students at Northwest College in Powell, Wyo., traveled to Denver on spring break specifically to sample marijuana. Three of the students told investigators they did not purchase or take any other drugs during their stay.

In the days that followed, Denver police confiscated the remaining cookies from the pot shop to test the levels of THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana.

Colorado marijuana regulations set a 10 mg serving size for edibles. The wrapper of the cookies bought by the students said each contained 65 mg of THC for 6½ servings. Tests showed the cookies were within the required limits, police said.

One of Pongi's friends became sick to his stomach after eating part of the cookie, but the others felt no negative effect.

Sources: Wash. sheriff's deputy accused of helping wife work as prostitute

The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — A veteran Washington sheriff's deputy is under criminal investigation after an allegation that he helped his wife work as a prostitute, according to two sources familiar with the inquiry.

The King County Sheriff's Office is conducting the investigation, the sources said, speaking on

condition of anonymity because the matter is still under review.

The FBI in Seattle is assisting in the investigation, one source said. Sheriff's investigators are looking into an allegation that the 49-year-old deputy, while under financial strain, aided his wife in working as a prostitute, including using the county's computer system to check the backgrounds of her clients, the sources said.

Two other deputies are also under investigation for possibly alerting him to the criminal inquiry, the sources said.

The first deputy could face prosecution for promoting prostitution and for misuse of public property, one source said. But the case is in its early stages, with no clear indication of whether charges will be filed, the source said. Search warrants were served Tuesday on the

house, car and desk of the deputy, a week after the allegation came to light, according to one source.

The matter publicly surfaced on Wednesday, when King County Sheriff John Urquhart sent a department-wide email in which he disclosed that three deputies had been placed on paid administrative leave Tuesday pending an investigation.

Urquhart did not reveal the na-

ture of the investigation, nor the names of the deputies.

He said two of the deputies were assigned to the Ravensdale Gun Range, a department shooting facility in southeast King County, and the third to Major Crimes.

The deputy at the center of the prostitution investigation is a 19-year veteran, who is currently involved in bitter divorce proceedings with his wife.

WORLD

Insurgents: Disarmament deal hangs in balance as two sides stand firm in Ukraine

FROM FRONT PAGE

The deal calls for disarming all paramilitary groups and the immediate return of all government buildings seized across the country.

But Pushilin, speaking at the insurgent-occupied regional headquarters in the eastern city of Donetsk, said Ukraine's new interim government in the capital, Kiev, is also occupying public buildings illegally.

"This is a reasonable agreement but everyone should vacate the buildings and that includes [Arsenyi] Yatsenyuk and [Oleksandr] Turchynov," he said referring to the acting Ukrainian prime minister and president.

Ukraine has scheduled a presidential election for May 25, but Pushilin reiterated a call to hold a referendum on self-determination for the Donetsk region by May 11. Such a referendum in Crimea led to its annexation by Russia.

Ukraine has faced months of turmoil, first in Kiev by protesters angry that former President Viktor Yanukovych wanted closer ties with Russia instead of Europe, then in eastern Ukraine by pro-Russian supporters. Now many of the buildings in the east occupied by the tacitly Moscow-supported insurgents are in the hands of highly trained gunmen, a situation that has complicated authorities' plans to retake them.

Pushilin said the insurgents would not hand over their weapons until the government halts efforts to reclaim the occupied buildings.

"As far as disarmament goes, the Kiev junta has already begun violating its agreements since yesterday, by announcing that it will not pull its troops out of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk," Pushilin said, referring to two cities occupied by the insurgency.

In a sign that Ukraine's fledgling government is ready to meet some of the protesters' demands, Turchynov and Yatsenyuk issued a joint statement Friday saying the Ukrainian government is "ready to conduct a comprehen-

sive constitutional reform that will secure powers of the regions," giving them a greater say in local governance.

They also pledged "a special status to the Russian language" and vowed to protect the rights of all citizens whatever language they spoke.

Yatsenyuk also told parliament Friday the government has drafted a law to offer amnesty to all those willing to lay down their arms and leave the occupied government buildings.

Russia has declined to recognize the legitimacy of Ukraine's interim government but it has not said they should vacate their offices.

In Washington, President Barack Obama conveyed skepticism about Russian promises to de-escalate the volatile situation in Ukraine, and said the United States and its allies were ready to impose more sanctions if Moscow doesn't make good on its commitments.

Meanwhile, former prime minister and presidential hopeful Yulia Tymoshenko arrived Friday in Donetsk in a bid to defuse the tensions and hear "the demands of Ukrainians who live in Donetsk."

In the eastern city of Donetsk, the barricade-lined space in front of the regional administration building, a mustering point for pro-Russian supporters, was nearly empty Friday despite the warm weather. Patriotic Soviet-era music blared over loudspeakers.

One man in the square, Igor Samoilov, 56, a militia member, said he would not support pulling back from any seized buildings.

"Russia can play these games with the West, but we will not," said Samoilov.

Sitting nearby, Yuri Kovalchuk, 86, said Moscow needed to intervene directly to settle matters.

"Peace will only prevail when the Kremlin will bring in its troops. As it did in Crimea," he said.



YONHAP/AP

Danwon High School students hold papers and candles and pray Friday for the safe return of their friends who were aboard the South Korea-based Sewol ferry, which sank Wednesday.

Captain, crew to face charges in South Korea ferry disaster

By YOOKYUNG LEE
AND FOSTER KLUG
The Associated Press

MOKPO, South Korea — The investigation into South Korea's ferry disaster focused on the sharp turn it took just before it began listing and on the possibility that a quicker evacuation order by the captain could have saved lives, officials said Friday, as rescuers struggled to find some 270 people still missing and feared dead.

Police said a high school vice principal who had been rescued from the ferry was found hanging Friday from a pine tree on Jindo, an island near the sunken ship where survivors have been housed. He was the leader of a group of 323 students traveling on the ship on a school excursion, and said in a suicide note that he felt guilty for being alive while more than 200 of his students were missing.

Prosecutors and police also said Friday they have asked a court to issue arrest warrants for the captain and two other crewmembers.

Besides the teacher, at least 28 people are now confirmed dead

from the ferry, the Sewol, which sank Wednesday. Officials said there were 174 survivors and about 270 people remain missing, many of them high school students.

The ship had left the northwest port of Incheon on Tuesday on an overnight journey to Jeju in the south with 476 people aboard. It capsized within hours of the crew making a distress call to the shore at 9 a.m. Soon, only its dark blue keel jutted out over the surface. By late Friday, even that had disappeared, and rescuers floated two giant beige buoys to mark the area. Navy divers attached underwater air bags to the 6,852-ton ferry to prevent it from sinking further, the Defense Ministry said.

Two U.S. MH-60 helicopters based on the U.S. Navy amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard were still conducting search-and-rescue operations in the Yellow Sea near the site where the Sewol sank, U.S. and South Korean officials said Friday.

The U.S. Navy is also sending two salvage specialists from Singapore to the area Saturday to provide advice during operations, according to South Korea's Minis-

try of National Defense.

On Jindo's shore, angry and bewildered relatives watched the rescue attempts. Some held a Buddhist prayer ritual, crying and praying for their relatives' safe return.

"I want to jump into the water with them," said Park Geum-san, 59, the great-aunt of a missing student, Park Ye-ji. "My loved one is under the water and it's raining. Anger is not enough."

South Korean officials said the accident happened at a point where the ferry had to make a turn.

Another angle being probed is the role of the captain, Lee Joon-seok, 68.

Yang Jung-jin, a senior prosecutor, said the captain was not present on the bridge when the ship was passing through an area with many islands clustered closely together, something he said is required by law. The captain also abandoned people in need of help and rescue, he said.

"The captain escaped before the passengers," Yang said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Ashley Rowland contributed to this report.



EPHREM LUKATSKY/AP

Residents look at a combat vehicle destroyed during a Ukrainian night combat operation in the village of Horodychevo.

7.2- magnitude quake shakes Mexico

The Associated Press

ACAPULCO, Mexico — A powerful magnitude-7.2 earthquake shook central and southern Mexico on Friday, sending panicked people into the streets, where broken windows and debris fell, but there were no early reports of major damage or casualties.

The U.S. Geological Survey said it was centered northwest of the Pacific resort of Acapulco, where many Mexicans are vacationing for the Easter holiday.

It was felt across at least a half-dozen states and Mexico's capital, where it shook for at least 30 seconds. Around the region, there were reports of isolated and minor damage, such as fallen fences, trees and broken windows. Chilpancingo, capital of the

southern state of Guerrero, where the quake was centered, reported a power outage, but service was restored after 15 minutes.

The quake struck 170 miles southwest of Mexico City, where people fled high rises and took to the streets, many in still in their bathrobes and pajamas on their day off.

The USGS initially calculated the quake's magnitude at 7.5, but later downgraded it to 7.2. It said the quake was centered 22 miles northwest of the town of Tecpan de Galeana, and was 15 miles deep.

In many cases of earthquakes in Mexico, it can take time to receive word from remote areas near the epicenter, where damage could be more extensive. No one answered the phone at the city hall for Tecpan de Galeana.

WORLD

Christians worldwide mark Good Friday

The Associated Press

Around the world, Christians came together in observance of Good Friday, which they believe was the day Jesus was crucified.

In the Philippines, Asia's largest Roman Catholic nation commemorated the occasion by re-enacting the crucifixion. Devotees had themselves nailed to wooden crosses, a ritual that church leaders do not condone but that draws huge crowds.

Undeterred, some penitents participate in the practice year after year.

Devotees undergo the re-enactment in the belief that extreme pain is a way to atone for their sins, attain miracle cures for illnesses or give thanks to God.

In the Holy Land, Christians marked the day with prayers and processions, with thousands of pilgrims crowding along the Via Dolorosa, or "Way of Suffering," carrying wooden crosses. They end at the ancient Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Tradition says the church was built on the site where Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected.



AARON FAVILA/AP

A Filipino devotee grimaces as he is nailed to a cross to re-enact the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in Santa Lucia village, Pampanga province, northern Philippines on Friday.



LEFT PHOTO BY RAJANISH KAKADE, RIGHT PHOTO BY DUSAN VRANIC/AP

Left: A Christian devotee in Mumbai, India. Right: Pilgrims carry crosses in Jerusalem.

A step from death in Iran, killer forgiven by victim's family

The Associated Press

The execution of an Iranian convicted of murder was halted at the very last minute in a dramatic scene this week when the mother of his victim forgave him as he stood on the gallows with the noose around his neck, according to Iranian media.

The convict, identified by his first name Bilal, had been sentenced to death for killing a teenager, Abdollah Hosseinzadeh, during a street fight in the market of the northern Iranian town of Nour seven years ago, the ISNA news agency reported. At the time, both Bilal and Hosseinzadeh were around 17 years old, ISNA said.

Bilal was brought blindfolded to the site of his planned execution Tuesday in a town square. He was stood on a chair on the gallows and the noose was put on his neck, according to pictures of the scene published by ISNA.

But at the last minute, Hosseinzadeh's mother, Samereh Aline-

jad, forgave him, after giving a speech to the crowd and then slapping Bilal in the face. Hosseinzadeh's father helped take the noose off of Bilal.

Hosseinzadeh's family had been urged to pardon Bilal and accept blood money instead of execution, a provision allowed to victim's families under Iranian law. Bilal was a student of Hosseinzadeh's father, a well-known former local soccer player who now coaches the sport.

Alinejad told the Shargh newspaper in an interview published Thursday that she resisted the pressure, including from her own family. She and her husband, who also have a daughter, lost another son who was killed in a car crash years earlier.

She told Shargh that her son Abdollah appeared to her in a dream and asked her to forgive his killer, and still she was reluctant.

Bilal will serve a prison sentence instead of being executed, according to the newspaper.

Everest guides killed in avalanche

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA

The Associated Press

KATMANDU, Nepal — An avalanche swept down a climbing route on Mount Everest early Friday, killing at least 12 Nepalese guides and leaving three missing in the deadliest disaster on the world's highest peak.

The Sherpa guides had gone early in the morning to fix ropes for other climbers when the avalanche hit just them below Camp 2 at about 6:30 a.m., Nepal Tourism Ministry official Krishna Lamsal said from the base camp where he is monitoring rescue efforts.

Rescue workers pulled out 12 bodies from under mounds of snow and ice and were searching for the three missing guides, Lamsal said.

Two Sherpas who were injured were taken by helicopter to hospitals in Nepal's capital, Katmandu.

The avalanche hit an area nicknamed the "popcorn field" for its bulging chunks of ice and is just below Camp 2, Ang Tshering of the Nepal Mountaineering Association said. Camp 2 sits at an elevation of 21,000 feet on the 29,035-foot mountain.

As soon as the avalanche hit, rescuers and climbers rushed to help.

Hundreds of climbers, guides and support crews are at Everest's base camp preparing to climb to the summit when weather conditions will be at their most favorable early next month. They have been setting up camps at higher altitudes, and guides have been fixing routes and ropes on the slopes above.

The Sherpa people are one of the main ethnic groups in Nepal's alpine region, and many make their living as climbing guides on Everest and other Himalayan peaks.

More than 4,000 climbers have reached the summit of Everest since 1953, when it was first conquered by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay. Hundreds have died attempting to reach the peak.

The worst recorded disaster on Everest had been a snowstorm on May 11, 1996, that caused the deaths of eight climbers. Six Nepalese guides were killed in an avalanche in 1970.

Earlier this year, Nepal announced several steps to better manage the heavy flow of climbers and speed up rescue operations. The steps included the dispatch of officials and security personnel to the base camp at 17,380 feet, where they will stay throughout the spring climbing season that ends in May.



ABRASH KHAMOUSHI, ISNA/AP

Samereh Alinejad, right, and her husband Abdolghani, left, remove the noose from the neck of their son's killer, blindfolded Bilal. The victim's family pardoned Bilal moments before he was to be executed Tuesday in Iran.

NATION

No pet left behind

Domestic shelters increasingly willing to accept victims' animal companions

BY JENNIFER PELTZ
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — When her abusive husband left for work last fall, she grabbed her kids, her dog and her bags, only to run up against a heart-wrenching obstacle: None of the city's more than 50 domestic violence shelters would accept the pet.

"Should I still leave?" the 34-year-old woman asked herself before fleeing and ultimately finding a foster home for her Chihuahua. Now, after months apart, the family and Peppah the Chihuahua recently moved into the city's first pet-friendly domestic violence shelter, one of a growing number across the country that address a common reason victims are reluctant to leave — they don't want to leave their pets behind.

Ranging from urban apartments to Western ranches, their numbers have shot up from four in 2008 to at least 73 now, with 15 more planned, according to Allie Phillips, a former Michigan prosecutor who has become a leading advocate for such shelters.

Behind the nondescript walls of a New York City building that quietly harbors about 120 adults and children, "pet-friendly apartment" signs mark units outfitted with such special features, such as a dog run built in a side alley, intended to keep residents from having to walk their pets on local streets, lest their batterers learn where they are.

Because of safety concerns, The Associated Press is withholding residents' identities, except for information they agreed could be used.

The shelter, run by the Urban Resource Institute, began allowing cats and pocket pets like gerbils and hamsters in June and dogs last month, with veterinary and other help from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and a Purina PetCare Co. donation for the dog run.

Animal welfare and domestic violence groups have found common cause in recent years amid growing interest in connections between animal cruelty and family abuse. Those links have spurred about two dozen states to start letting pets be included in protective orders since 2006; others are considering it, including New Hampshire and Ohio.

Studies have found about 70 percent of domestic violence survivors say their batterers also threatened, injured or killed their pets, and 25 to 50 percent say they delayed fleeing out of fear of what would happen to animals left behind, said psychologist Randall Lockwood, an ASPCA senior vice president.

"The pets that are normally a

"The pets that are normally a source of comfort in families can become targeted."

Randall Lockwood
ASPCA senior vice president

source of comfort in families can become targeted, particularly if the abuser sees that as a way to get the power or control they're looking for without inflicting harm directly on the child or spouse," he said.

Around the country, pet-friendly shelters are as varied as the Women's Center of Mid-Minnesota, which has housed dozens of cats and dogs over decades in a six-bedroom house in Brainerd, and 5-year-old Littlegrass Ranch, which finds short-term safe houses for abused women and their horses in the Texas hill country.

Founder Christie Kitchens says when she was thinking about what she needed to take with her when leaving an abusive relationship long ago, "everything else was optional but the horse."

Other organizations house pets or arrange foster homes while domestic violence survivors stay

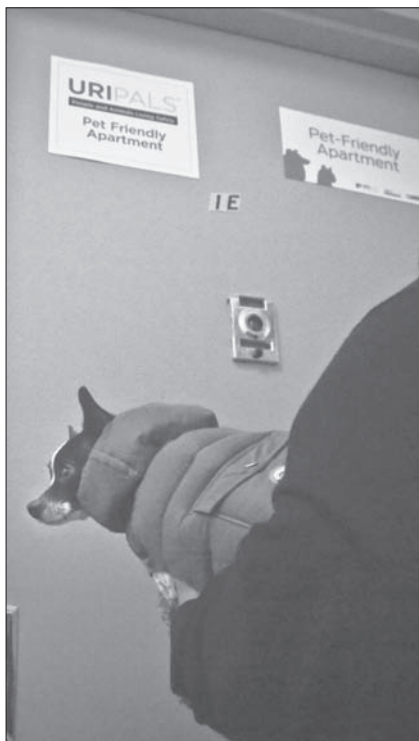
elsewhere. In Los Angeles, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals' Animal Safety Net program has housed more than 330 such pets since 1998, some from as far as Florida.

Pet-friendly shelters have faced questions about whether animals are taking some focus and resources from abused people, though advocates say they're only responding to the priority some clients place on their pets.

For Peppah's owner, nothing can top having her three children and the dog together again.

"The kids — when finally we got here, they didn't even want to go to school that day," she said. "They just wanted to stay home and be with her."

Online:
Urban Resource Institute: <http://uriny.org/>
ASPCA: <http://www.aspc.org/>
Sheltering People and Pets Together: <http://alliephilips.com/saf-tprogram/>



PHOTOS BY BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Above, Peppah, a pet Chihuahua, plays outside in a dog run at a shelter for victims of domestic violence in New York. The shelter is the city's first pet-friendly domestic violence shelter, one in a fast-growing number of similar sanctuaries around the country that reflect growing awareness that animals can be both victims of family violence and key factors in their owners' willingness to flee. At top, Peppah, wearing a doggie coat, is carried into her pet-friendly apartment by her owner.

NATION

Cake and 'culture wars'

Denied request helped spur battles over religious, gay rights

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI
The Associated Press

LAKEWOOD, Colo. — The encounter at Jack Phillips' Masterpiece Cakeshop lasted less than a minute.

Phillips stepped out from behind the counter in his small, pastry-crammed shop to meet customers Charlie Craig and Dave Mullins. They told him they wanted a cake to celebrate their own marriage.

Phillips replied he couldn't, but that he'd be glad to make one for other occasions, such as birthdays. Left unsaid was how making a gay wedding cake would violate his Christian faith, how he does not make ones for Halloween or bachelor parties, either.

Craig and Mullins left the shop, stunned. Left unsaid was that they viewed themselves as a regular couple, their wedding a private celebration, not a political statement. They simply wanted a no-frills cake.

Crushed, they posted a note about the encounter on Facebook and soon the cake had become a cause, with the sides becoming stand-ins for the culture wars: Phillips was portrayed as the intolerant business owner. The couple became the gay rights activists pushing their agenda, some claimed.

It was one of several incidents that inspired legislation in at least 11 states that would have allowed business owners to cite their religious beliefs in denying service to patrons. Most measures have died

amid a national outcry that they would legalize discrimination.

Along the way, the stories of those caught up in the clash over fast-changing social mores can get lost. Phillips, Craig and Mullins are just three.

Phillips, 57, grew up near the teeming strip mall that houses his bakery in Lakewood, on the edge of Denver's suburban sprawl.

After graduating high school, Phillips went to work at a bakery and found he enjoyed the adrenaline kick and sense of achievement that came from catching doughnuts as they came off the conveyor belt and glazing and sprinkling them.

Nowadays, he loves his work for the way it lets him improve people's lives. "That's," he said, "what Christ does."

Phillips grew up in a religious household, but in his early 20s he felt adrift. He drank and fathered two children with his girlfriend, Debbie. As he was driving one day, he felt something extraordinary. "The Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin," he recalled.

Shaken, he told Debbie that night he had found Christ. She said the same had just happened to her. They married and had a third child.

Eventually Phillips started his own shop, serving residents of the new housing developments that were rising nearby. His daughter and 87-year-old mother also work there now.

From the start, he knew there'd be limitations on what he could



PHOTOS BY BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

Above: Masterpiece Cakeshop owner Jack Phillips works March 10 inside his store in Lakewood, Colo. Phillips is appealing a recent ruling against him in a legal complaint filed with the Colorado Civil Rights Commission by a gay couple after he refused to make a wedding cake for them.

do. "In everything I do, I think about how people will perceive Christ through me, by what I sell, what I make," Phillips said.

For weddings, he interviews the couple to find out how they met, their mutual interests, what color dresses the bridesmaids will wear.

"When I decorate a cake, I feel like I'm part of the party," said Phillips, who had refused previous orders for cakes for gay weddings.

Phillips said he once employed a gay man in his bakery and makes regular birthday cakes for a lesbian couple. His youngest daughter, Lisa Eldrick, 34, said Phillips never had problems with her and her siblings' various gay friends.

Since Mullins and Craig visited in July 2012, gay marriage has been legalized in nine states. Polls show that a majority of Americans now approve of it. Phillips is unruffled.

"The Bible says it's going to happen," he said. "This is a sign we don't acknowledge Him as our creator."

'You're not equal'

Dave Mullins and Charlie Craig were sitting on their couch one Sunday morning in 2012, watching television. Craig turned to Mullins and said: "We should get married."

"Just so you know," Mullins replied, "I have a ring on hold for

you."

When they were growing up, gay marriage was a foreign concept.

Craig, 34, grew up in a Wyoming town where he was viciously teased, even as he tried to deny his sexuality by dating girls. He graduated high school the year Matthew Shepard, a gay University of Wyoming student, was killed because of his orientation.

Craig said he still feels awkward if Mullins holds hands with him in public. "I feel like something bad could happen to us," he said in their new town house in Denver.

Mullins, 29, grew up in Colorado at a time when voters passed a ballot measure to prevent any city from passing protections for gays. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the measure, laying the legal groundwork for gay marriage rulings nearly 20 years later.

The couple met in Denver through a mutual friend. A 2006 ballot measure outlawed gay marriages in Colorado, so they planned a small wedding in Massachusetts, where it was legal. That would be followed by a larger reception in Colorado.

The Lakewood restaurant hosting the reception suggested they get their cake at Masterpiece.

The couple said Phillips' rejection was more painful than the times they have been slurred in public.

"It's like the institution and society are saying, 'You're not equal,'" Mullins said.

Supporters abound

Within minutes of his Facebook post about the encounter, supportive messages began arriving in Mullins' account — and Phillips' shop was deluged with angry emails and phone calls.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a complaint on the couple's behalf. Phillips' attorney argued, unsuccessfully, that the cake was a form of political speech.

A judge in December ruled Phillips violated state law that forbids refusal of service based on sexual orientation, and ordered him to make the cake or to pay a fine.

"The heart of the issue is: Am I going to obey and serve what I believe the Bible is teaching?" Phillips said.

After the ruling — Phillips is appealing — so many supporters swarmed Phillips' shop that they sold out of everything, even after frantically baking 360 chocolate chip cookies. Mullins and Craig were inundated by offers of free cakes from as far away as Japan.

In the end, they accepted one from another local bakery.

The affair has made them realize, Mullins said, that "as a minority, you don't have the option to opt out of the culture wars."



Dave Mullins, left, and husband Charlie Craig play cards at their home in Westminster, Colo. They are the couple who filed the complaint after Phillips denied their request in July 2012.

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Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Richard Braun, General Manager, Europe
John Panasiwicz, General Manager, Pacific
Lt. Col. Jeff Meyer, Europe commander
Lt. Col. Brian Porter, Pacific commander

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editorial Director
leonard.terry@stripes.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com
Sam Amrhein, Deputy Managing Editor
amrhein.sam@stripes.com
Tina Croley, Enterprise Editor
croley.tina@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Teddie Weyr, News Editor Europe/Mideast
wey.teddie@stripes.com;
+49(0)631.3615.9310; cell
+49(0)173.315.1881; DSN (314)583.9310

Pacific

Paul Alexander, News Editor Pacific
alexander.paul@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.5377; cell (080)5883.1673
DSN (315)225.5377

Washington

Patrick Dickson, Washington Bureau Chief
dickson.pat@stripes.com
(+1)703(693.6957; DSN (312)223.6957
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com
Joe Gromelski, Assistant Managing Editor, Web
gromelski.joe@stripes.com
Sean Moores, Assistant Managing Editor,
Sports, Features and Graphics
moores.sean@stripes.com

CONTACT US

Washington

tel: (+1)202.761.0900; DSN (312)763.0900;
fax: (+1)202.761.0890
529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC
20045-1301

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contacts

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OPINION

Attorney general's coded language?

By JONAH GOLDBERG

Last week, the president's lap dog blew his dog whistle (a dog whistle, if you didn't know, is coded language intended for a special constituency).

Speaking to the National Action Network, Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said, "The last five years have been defined ... by lasting reforms even in the face of unprecedented, unwarranted, ugly and divisive adversity." He continued: "If you don't believe that, you look at the way — forget about me, forget about me. You look at the way the attorney general of the United States was treated yesterday by a House committee. ... What attorney general has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment? What president has ever had to deal with that kind of treatment?"

Now, bear in mind the audience. The National Action Network is Al Sharpton's plaything, often providing the shock troops Sharpton needs for rent-a-mob protests, shakedown operations and MSNBC photo ops. Holder didn't say criticism of him and (President Barack) Obama is racially motivated, but the notion the audience (or the media) would take it any other way doesn't pass the laugh test.

For the record, there's nothing special about the rough time Holder has received. Forget Harry Daugherty of Teapot Dome fame or John Mitchell, who went to prison. Ed Meese's critics had "Meese Is a Pig" posters printed up. Janet Reno and John Ashcroft never got cake and ice cream from opponents.

The best recent comparison is probably Alberto R. Gonzales, George W. Bush's second attorney general, because like Holder, he was a fairly incompetent partisan loyalist set with a thin skin who was treated brutally by Democrats. Some even tried to impeach him. I don't recall Gonzales insin-



Attorney General Eric Holder has decried the treatment of himself and President Barack Obama.

uating that such efforts were anti-Latino.

Holder has deserved all he's gotten. He earned his contempt of Congress citation by refusing to provide documents on the disastrous Fast and Furious operation that left an American dead from a gun given to Mexican drug gangs by the U.S. government. If anything, Holder deserves more grief, particularly from a media that seem to have forgotten his efforts to surveil journalists' phone records and Name Fox News' James Rosen an unindicted co-conspirator in an espionage case.

Even inside the White House, Holder is considered too political. "Holder substitutes his political judgment for his legal judgment, and his political judgment isn't very good," said an unnamed White House official, according to the Washington Post's David Ignatius.

Holder's remarks come at a convenient time. In a widely discussed New York Mag-

azine essay, Jonathan Chait argues that race relations have gotten worse under Obama. Chait believes that liberals have become obsessed with conservative racism as the real explanation for everything Republicans do.

Meanwhile, he says conservatives have cocooned themselves in a kind of righteous victimhood, where racism is a relevant issue only when conservatives are falsely accused of it (it's a fair point that conservatives should be more conspicuously concerned about racism).

It is an at times brave and insightful, if not uniformly persuasive, essay. The Holder episode casts light on one of his arguments. According to Chait, Obama has steadfastly refused to make race a national issue, even as the ugly racial conversation has raged. "In almost every instance when his blackness has come to the center of public events, however, [Obama] has refused to impute racism to his critics," Chait writes.

That's largely (though not entirely) true about what the president has said himself. But it is manifestly untrue about what he has allowed to be said on his behalf. He didn't mind the racial theater congressional Democrats put on when black congressmen marched through tea party protests to sign Obamacare. One of those congressmen, civil rights hero John Lewis, gave a stirring speech at the 2012 Democratic Convention and suggested that a vote for the GOP amounted to "going back" to Jim Crow.

Republican presidents are routinely expected to denounce outrageous comments and dog-whistle comments by members of their own party, never mind members of their Cabinet. Not Obama. His feigned aloofness is his exonerator, even as racial politics get ever more poisonous.

jgoldberg@latimescolumnists.com

Bombing victim finding joy in everyday life

By JEFF BAUMAN

It is a weekend for working around the house. My fiancée, Erin, and I have the baby's room to paint and some IKEA furniture to assemble. I roll out of bed early — 10:30 — and get into my wheelchair. Erin is already making coffee in the kitchen.

"I started the first wall," she says. "I love that gray." Erin never bugs me about sleeping late. For a few months after I was injured in the Boston Marathon bombings, I often slept 15 hours a day. The doctors said my body needed to heal. It must still be healing because I hardly ever see 8 a.m. anymore.

I finish my coffee, then roll into the bedroom for my stubbles. Two days after the bombing, both my legs were amputated above the knee. A year later, I'm still unstable on my artificial legs, so in private I sometimes use my stubbles, small platforms that attach to the bottom of my thighs. Because they are only a couple of inches high, and don't have knees, I can walk and stand on them for hours.

With my stubbles on, I'm less than 4 feet tall, so I paint the bottom half of the wall. Erin stretches for the top, doing things I'll never be able to do, like stand on tiptoes. We had been dating for only a year when the bomb went off, but she never left my side. She knew how to lightly lift the hair from my burnt forehead without causing me pain. When I joked, "Don't worry E, our kids will have legs," she laughed, I realized how much I loved her. We hugged,

and it was the first time we touched without pain. It was six more months before the engagement, and the pregnancy, but it felt inevitable.

"What about trim?" I ask.

"I don't know. I was thinking yellow or green."

"How about red for the Sox?"

"Jeff ..."

"I'm kidding."

The doorbell rings. "That's Kevin," Erin says. "I asked him to help with the fun." Kevin Horn is my store manager at Costco. He visited me every day in the hospital, and stopped by my mom's apartment for months to give her flowers because he knew how worried she was. He's gay, in a long-term relationship but with no plans for children, and sometimes I feel like his semi-adopted son.

"Heavy Key!" I shout, opening the door. Kevin is standing there with a drill. "You don't know anything about IKEA furniture, do you?" I say, laughing.

"It's a gift for you and Erin."

He and I sit on the floor and unbox the futon pieces. It does not go well. There is fake wood everywhere, and none of it fits. Kevin keeps insisting we follow the directions. I'm convinced the drill could solve all our problems, if we'd give it a chance. In the end, Kevin is driven crazy because the slipcase won't fit snugly on the cushion. Erin talks him down. I just laugh; I've been laughing with Kevin all afternoon.

Afterward, I make lattes for everyone, and we sit in the baby's room, admiring our work. I think: Are we watching paint dry?

But Erin and Kevin talk about the natural light, and all the memories this room will hold. For a minute, it's hard to believe this is my life: my house, my love, my friend, my baby on the way.

"This was a great day," I tell Kevin, as I roll with him to the door. "One of the best."

Most people would look at me sideways for saying this about such a mundane day. After all, since the bombing, I've stood on the field at Fenway during the seventh-inning stretch of a World Series baseball game; I sat in the presidential box at the State of the Union address. Erin and I met Michelle Obama.

But Kevin understands. He knows that the things normal people take for granted — going to the bathroom on their own, getting out of bed without falling down, making a latte for friends — once seemed insurmountable to me. There were times, when the sweat poured off me as I struggled and failed to take one step, that I wanted to give up, because I thought that no matter how hard I tried, I would never be self-sufficient again. I would always be a burden to the people I love.

So those other experiences, they are special. They are memories I'll always have.

But this experience — doing household chores, being helpful, living a normal life — is what matters. It is what I worked so hard for.

And right now, it's all I really want.

Jeff Bauman's book "Stronger" is out this month.

OPINION

Remember Boston, and the suffering elsewhere

By SUSAN BRENNEMAN

The 118th Boston Marathon, next week, will actually be the first of its kind — the first running of the iconic American foot race after two bombers killed three people, injured 263 (many horribly) and shook the nation a year ago.

A race that had long since settled into familiar ritual was suddenly fraught. Security, high last year, will be doubled this year. Nine thousand additional participants are expected, along with 1 million spectators, twice the usual number. Media coverage, never shabby for the event, will multiply. It won't be just Runner's World poised to record the winners at the finish line, it will be all the world, and who wins won't be the half of it.

The buildup began weeks ago. Boston radio is playing "Why we run" stories — "This year it's for, you know, greater reasons," Juli Windsor told NPR. "60 Minutes" unfolded a "now it can be told" report on the manhunt for the Tsarnaev brothers. Sports Illustrated invited all of Boston to a commemorative-cover shoot on Saturday. And at a ceremony timed for one year after the first bomb exploded, a moment of silence will be observed.

If you miss all that, you can catch the montage of security cam, phone cam and professional cam highlights that will be played and replayed in the coming days: The popping sounds, the shouts, the black hat and the white hat, the Good Samaritans, the murdered MIT police officer, the Watertown shootout, the bleeding boy in the backyard boat.

When America gets outraged, we communicate it. When we are attacked, the furries descend. We make noise, we want answers, we demand action. Last year we were riveted for days by real-time reporting and vigilante rumors, impatient for results. We chased down the details of an immigrant family, divided if not solved the mystery of "why." Lives were saved and heroes anointed. Flowers, flags and running shoes piled up in Copley Square. We watched the funeral processions, followed the survivors' progress. We were — we are — flamboyantly, defiantly Boston Strong.



Medical workers aid the injured following an explosion at the finish line of the 2013 Boston Marathon. Such events, rare in the United States, are more common in places that also need to be remembered.

But here is something we may have missed along the way: On April 14, the day before the marathon, at least 20 people were killed as al-Shabab jihadists caromed through Mogadishu, Somalia. And hours before the marathon on April 15, Iraq was wracked by multiple car bombs — at least 30 dead, as many as 350 injured by some reports, all on just one violent day in a record year of mayhem there.

Such events are the raw material of daily news organizations and even of op-ed editors — these distant tragedies were not ignored by U.S. media. But did you remember them? Will CNN or Fox or your newspaper offer updates this week, will they cover the anniversary? In Somalia, did the

furries descend? In Baghdad, were the mass-terminals met by investigators prepared to chase them to the ends of the Earth? How far have the wheels of justice turned in these nations? Can any of the maimed dance, or run, again?

Surely those touched by the violence in these cities will commemorate the carnage. But it is safe to say there isn't a big market for Iraq Strong rubber bracelets in Baghdad or for Mogadishu Strong T-shirts in Somalia. Maybe someday.

The generals prepare us for asymmetrical warfare. But the deeper asymmetry is a world divided into nations and cities that have — or don't — the wherewithal to mend the holes that get blown in the so-

cial fabric. We live where the rule of law demands action, where citizens have the luxury of insisting that attention must be paid; elsewhere, resilience is measured with little fanfare.

It is right and good this week to remember the tragedy in Boston, to mourn the losses, commemorate the heroes, celebrate the way so many have done so much so quickly to stitch up what was blown apart on Boylston Street last year. Boston Strong indeed. But don't forget about Mogadishu and Baghdad, and everywhere else bombs burst in the air.

Susan Brenneiman is the deputy op-ed editor of the Los Angeles Times.

A novel way to read between the lines in Washington

By DOYLE MCMANUS

Reading is such an improbable idea — a miracle, really. Yet simple squiggles on a page, arranged just so, can convey ideas that change the way we think or introduce to us characters we love for a lifetime. In celebration of reading — and of this week-end's Los Angeles Times Festival of Books — yes, for good readers (who also happen to be writers) to celebrate books that mattered in their lives.

If you want a friend in Washington, the saying goes, get a dog. But if you're looking to understand Washington, I'd recommend fiction.

Not a thriller or a potboiler, though. I mean serious fiction, specifically the stories and novels of Jay McInerney, a brilliant war correspondent for the Washington Post who decided he could tell more truth if he shook off the strictures of journalism.

"Journalism is useful," he once wrote, "but truth wears many masks, and in Washington facts sometimes tend to mislead. All the facts sometimes tend to mislead absolutely."

Just his first great story, "The Congressman Who Loved Flaubert," convinced me

he was right. We see Washington politicians in action all the time, thanks to the endless chatter of cable news. But Just's characters have something television and newspapers often can't convey: complicated inner lives. They are driven by ambition — no surprise there. But they're also gripped by uncertainty and regret, two demons no one in public life is allowed to acknowledge.

Listen, for example, to the protagonist of "The Congressman Who Loved Flaubert," a once-idealistic Southern Democrat who worries about the compromise he's made in his struggle for power in the House of Representatives:

"It was not a place for lost causes," Rep. Lou LaRuth reflects. "There were too many conflicting interests ... [and] too many people: 435 representatives and about a quarter of them quite bright. Quite bright enough and knowledgeable enough to strangle embarrassing proposals and take revenge as well. Everyone was threatened if the eccentrics got out of hand."

Just wrote that story in 1972, but he could just as well have been describing today.

LaRuth, at 40, has no secret answers. Not any illusions," Just writes. "The congressman, contemplating all of it, is both

angry and sad.... He thinks that everything in his life is meant to end in irony and contradiction." Some members of the current House would recognize that feeling all too well.

"House of Cards" fans will hear echoes of Francis Underwood in Just's portraits of Washington, but without television's manic pacing and melodramatic twists. On the pages of a book, Just's characters can tell their inner monologues play out more deeply and more truthfully than the best of Kevin Spacey's wry asides to the camera. Like all Washington correspondents, I'm often asked — by friends, relatives, audiences — to reveal something secret, something we can't put in the newspaper. I usually wave my hands, embarrassed, and say there really aren't secrets we know but that not publish — very few, anyway. But that's not a full answer. There are plenty of secrets that don't get written about. Sometimes they're simply hard to pin down. Sometimes they're in the gray zone between public life and private life — the gay senator who won't come out of the closet, the elderly congressman who's no longer up to the job.

And sometimes they're easy to write about in the aggregate — the officials who

go easy on industries they regulate, thinking about their next jobs — but difficult to write in the more damning particular. Hardly ever do officials sit down with reporters and confess: Here's how I lost my idealism. Here's when I decided, what the hell, I can't change the system. I might as well make money.

That's why we need fiction. And even in Ward Just's elegant fiction, the characters don't always tell the whole truth.

"All the stories they told had something missing. This, it seemed to me then as it does now, is common among government people," a character in Just's most recent novel, "American Romantic," muses. "There would come a moment when their voices trailed off and any attentive listener would know they were deep in their memories, pondering what they were unable — not unwilling but unable — to say aloud. The missing piece."

It's a reminder to journalists and their readers that they're never quite getting the full story. Almost no one ever knows the full story — and those who do aren't telling.

Doyle McManus is the Angeles Times' Washington columnist.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Mother accused of lying about son's location

NE ADAMS — Authorities say a southeast Nebraska woman has been arrested, accused of lying to officers who were trying to find her son.

Officers went to the woman's home in Adams on Tuesday in their search for Jaryn Sanne, 23, who is wanted on a felony warrant alleging forgery in Gage County. The officers said Lisa Sanne, 50, repeatedly told them her son was not at home, although he'd been living there off and on. She acknowledged that his vehicle was parked in the driveway.

The officers said they suspected she was lying, so they waited outside the property while a search warrant was obtained.

Once armed with the warrant, the officers entered home and found Jaryn Sanne in his bedroom.

Man accused of stealing crawfish

LA CROWLEY — Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries agents have arrested a 39-year-old Crowley man who is accused of stealing crawfish from traps in an Acadia Parish pond.

Sheriff Wayne Melancon said in a news release that Paul Mire faces up to 10 years in prison at hard labor and a fine up to \$3,000.

Melancon said state wildlife agents saw Mire in a crawfish pond that does not belong to him. The arrest, aided by sheriff's deputies, occurred at the site of the suspected thefts on Crowley E-11 Highway near Mire's home.

Melancon said his office has received numerous complaints of theft from crawfish farmers parish-wide.

Famous mountain lion exposed to poison

CA LOS ANGELES — A mountain lion that appeared strong and healthy when it was photographed as it ruled a wilderness park in the middle of Los Angeles has been exposed to rat poison and is suffering from mange, officials said.

Scientists noticed the big cat known as P-22 was sickly when they recaptured it last month to replace batteries in its GPS tracking collar, National Park Service spokeswoman Kate Kuykendall said Thursday.

The 4-year-old cougar probably ate animal excrement exposed to poison from residential rodent traps, she said.

"When people put these bait traps outside their homes or businesses, they may not realize that the poison works its way up the food chain, becoming more lethal as the dose accumulates in larger animals," said Dr. Seth Riley, an urban wildlife expert at Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

P-22 was treated and returned to the 4,300-acre Griffith Park, where it continues to successfully hunt its natural prey of mule deer. Biologists said it's unclear whether the cat will fully recover.

THE CENSUS

\$3,500

The amount donated as of Thursday to an online fund to help a recently exonerated man who spent nearly 25 years behind bars for a killing that happened while he was at Disney World. Jonathan Fleming was freed last week after a judge dismissed the 1989 case. After hearing of Fleming's ordeal and his hopes of getting an education, a finance executive set up the campaign through the crowdfunding site Indiegogo.



CHRAIG CUNNINGHAM, CHARLESTON (W.Va.) DAILY MAIL/AP

Future motorists on the move

Dakota Smith, 4, right, drives Monday with brother Dallas, 3, in his battery-powered car in Charleston, W.Va.

German shepherd called to jury duty

NJ BRIDGETON — At least one prospective juror in New Jersey could take a bite out of crime.

Cumberland County has summoned IV Griner to jury duty. The only problem is IV is a 5-year-old German Shepherd.

Her owner said he figured out the mistake as soon as the summons arrived at his Bridgeton home.

The dog's owner is Barrett Griner IV. He uses the Roman numeral for four in his name. He named his dog using the letters "I" and "V."

The county's judiciary coordinator said the computer likely misplaced the Roman numeral for Barrett's last name and mailed the summons.

Woman pleads guilty in Easter goods theft

VT RUTLAND — A Vermont woman has pleaded guilty to shoplifting mostly Easter goodies from Wal-Mart.

Monica Barker, 22, of Rutland, was arrested last Thursday in downtown Rutland after police wrestled her to the ground.

Police said Barker shoplifted

almost \$70 worth items. Police said most of the stolen items were Easter-related, including candy eggs, a cookie- and egg-coloring kit and spring grass.

Police said Barker told them that she planned to give the items to her child and godchild.

Barker pleaded guilty to the theft charge in exchange for the dismissal of the other two charges. She received a suspended jail sentence and has been placed on probation with the conditions that she stay away from Wal-Mart and receive counseling for impulsive theft.

Passenger ousts shuttle riders, steals vehicle

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Passengers aboard a SuperShuttle van bound for the San Francisco airport were left standing by the side of a road after one of their fellow riders ousted them and stole the vehicle.

The shuttle had picked up three travelers at hotels in downtown San Francisco on Sunday when a fourth rider boarded the van.

When the shuttle stopped to pick up a fifth person and the driver got out to help load luggage, the suspect took the wheel and drove off.

After a few blocks, the man stopped the van and let the pas-

sengers out with their suitcases. The four stranded riders then called a taxi and split the fare to the airport.

Police said the van was found later Sunday in Alameda County, but the suspect remains at large.

2 ships collided; cargo ship grounded

VA NORFOLK — Two vessels collided in a main shipping channel and a 751-foot cargo ship ran aground in the lower Chesapeake Bay on Tuesday in high winds gusting up to 70 mph, the Coast Guard said.

The 79-foot rig vessel Petite and the 1,065-foot container ship MSC Charleston collided about 7:30 p.m. Tuesday "due to weather" in the Thimble Shoal Channel, the Coast Guard said in a news release. There were no reports of injuries, damage or pollution and both vessels were safely anchored, the release said.

About an hour after the collision, the 751-foot bulk carrier Lynn Ornak, anchored at the Lynnhaven Anchorage east of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, ran aground near First Landing State Park, the Coast Guard said. There were no reports of injuries, damage or pollution from the grounding, and the vessel was not blocking other water traffic, said

Coast Guard spokesman Petty Officer First Class Brandyn Hill.

Winds gusting to 70 mph at Cape Henry caused 12 ships anchored in the vicinity of Lynnhaven to drag anchor, the Coast Guard said. The Virginia Pilot office dispatched 11 pilots and local tug boat companies were recruited to help stabilize the vessels and to aid others struggling in high winds to stay moored, the news release said.

Police probe who set up bogus Twitter account

MI ROYAL OAK — Royal Oak police investigators are trying to determine who set up a fake account in the department's name on Twitter.

Police in the Detroit suburb learned about the bogus account last week after someone posted a comment about medical marijuana.

According to Lt. Dave Clemens, the fake police account responded by writing: "We now know who you are, and we are going to watch you."

Royal Oak police do not have a Twitter account.

The department contacted Twitter and had the phony account shut down.

From wire reports

VIDEO GAMES

Long live nostalgia

‘Mercenary Kings’ an enjoyable throwback to gaming’s past

By MATT MILLER
Game Informer Magazine

When certain games release, you find yourself wondering why more developers haven’t done the same thing before. “Mercenary Kings” is one of those games. While few inherently new ideas are at play in Tribute’s latest project, the combined whole is an impressive effort that mixes classic shooting (inspired by games like “Metal Slug” or “Mega Man”) and injects some of the customization, storytelling, and ancillary mechanics more prevalent in modern games. Whether playing alone or with friends, this massive adventure should keep most players busy for hours.

You are one of the Kings, a mercenary force brought back to life through a secret scientific formula to rid a tropical island of the terrorist threat named CLAW. Before each mission, you wander through camp purchasing first aid kits, equipping new bionic mods, and customizing equipment. Once your soldier is up to snuff, you tackle missions that have you rescuing hostages, taking down giant robotic bosses, gathering supplies, or infiltrating ancient temples. More than 100 missions are available, but many of these outings see you returning to the same maps again and again. While all of “Mercenary Kings” maps are suitably large, it’s a grind coming back to the same location the seventh or eighth time.

The level designs and enemy placements are top notch, exhibiting a strong eye for a gradual challenge curve that always keeps you on your toes, whether through tough platforming, challenging baddies or a severe time limit. More than 100 distinct enemy types await your attack, constantly demanding new tactics. The shooting me-



MCT

“Mercenary Kings” is a masterpiece of old-school 2-D presentation, filled with clever nods to older games, but with a distinct style and backgrounds all its own.

chanic feels purposefully stiff, only allowing you to shoot in straight lines up and down or left and right — a direct homage to the games that inspired “Mercenary Kings.” Little touches like an active reload system (a la “Gears of War”) add a modern touch, forcing you to time your shots and movement to coincide with when bullets remain in your magazine.

While a number of boss models are repeated or show up in only minor varia-

tions, they are usually excellent fights. With time and patience, each telegraphs its movements, helping you to gain a sense of mastery. However, I’m not a fan of the odd approach to tracking down a boss. In any given stage, you might need to track your targets to one of several possible locations on the map. If they aren’t there, you must run across the stage again to the next location. If they are there, they’re usually on a timer, and they flee to the next location

before you can finish them off. It’s a frustrating mechanic that I could have done without, even though the game provides a couple of ways to work around the issue.

One of the biggest features that sets “Mercenary Kings” apart is its rewarding customization. After acquiring money and materials on missions, you can upgrade your character’s armor for more hit points, install new bionic mods that offer effects like faster speed or higher damage, or change your outfit colors.

However, the weapon system far outstrips everything else, offering around 300 distinct weapon pieces that can all be mixed and matched to create an arsenal for any occasion. By the end, you might have a handgun that shoots electric bullets, or a shotgun with a sniper-rifle scope that looks like a trombone.

As I explored Mandragora Island, my admiration for the gorgeous art, animation, and music grew. “Mercenary Kings” is a masterpiece of old school 2-D presentation, filled with clever nods to older games, but with a distinct style to the characters and backgrounds all its own.

“Mercenary Kings” is a testament to the idea that you can get too much of a good thing. The sleek art, old-school shooting and deep customization options are immensely fun, as are the stages that you play through — the first few times. As it is, this style of shooting action feels like it’s stretched thin over such a lengthy campaign, and some of the missions might have been more fun if I hadn’t already explored the maps so thoroughly. That tedium certainly isn’t enough for me to warn people away from such a richly illustrated tribute to the roots of the shooter.

Platforms: PlayStation 4, PC
Online: mercenarykings.com

No joke: ‘Goat Simulator’ for real, more or less

By MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

Every so often, a game is released that reminds us all that gaming is ultimately not that serious of a hobby. “Goat Simulator,” from Coffee Stain Studios, is the game flying that particular banner in 2014.

In “Goat Simulator,” players are given full control of an indestructible goat, armed with a full host of goat-related abilities and let loose upon a world in which physics are more of a suggestion than an immutable law of nature. In this world gone mad, players can head butt houses, jump over cars and backflip off trampolines — you know, basic goat stuff.

Points are accumulated by successfully completing stunts and finishing side missions that involve things like blowing up a gas station or fending off all challengers in goat fight club. The first rule of goat fight club is that we do

Overall grade: **C+**

not talk about what happens when you finish goat fight club, but it is sufficiently hilarious.

The game feels quite a bit like the free range modes in older skateboarding games. Much like those games, the entire point is to pull off crazy stunts, revel in silly humor and not worry about getting invested in a time sink.

The game is very simple and straightforward, which is to be expected as Coffee Stain created the simulator during a game jam — a rapid-fire game development challenge — and released it as somewhat of an April Fool’s joke.

Much of the enjoyment you’ll get from “Goat Simulator” is tied to how funny you find sending an indestructible mammal hurtling into the sky after trying to head butt a semi-truck. If that sounds dumb (it’s sort of meant to), then



Coffee Stain Studios

“Goat Simulator” is for fans of PC games who would find it amusing to fling an indestructible goat around in various settings.

this game is probably not for you.

Accumulating points don’t unlock anything for players, but

there are plenty of little secrets and Easter eggs to be found scattered around the world. Adven-

turous players can find a jet pack, unlock an evil goat avatar and ride a hang glider.

I found “Goat Simulator” to be a fun little diversion, but ultimately it’s a joke, and like any joke, the more you hear it, the less entertaining it is. I had a blast sending my goat down a waterslide, bouncing it off a trampoline and sending it rocketing into lower orbit, but that’s really all there is to the game.

It’s a bit pricey (\$10) for what it offers. It’s not an exorbitant price tag — more akin to a mobile phone game than a full-fledged release. This game with a lower price tag and on mobile platforms would have been perfect.

Bottom line: C+ If you’re a fan of silly humor and want a change of pace from the normal indie-platformer and early-access titles flooding the PC gaming scene, “Goat Simulator” a shot. All others might want to avoid it.

Platform: PC exclusive
Online: goat-simulator.com

TRAVEL

The rhythm of the islands

Traditional Hawaiian music wafts from dives to trendy resorts on Oahu

By JOSH NOEL
Chicago Tribune

Every few songs it would happen: The ukulele launched into a furious strum, the bass began to gallop, and the three powerful voices behind those instruments erupted into a harmonious whirl. Then someone danced.

There was no telling which songs would send a he or a she into a barroom spin to a roomful of cheers. At least there was no telling for a visitor from the mainland venturing out of Oahu's tourist bubble to catch some authentic Hawaiian music.

"Oh, someone's going to dance to this one," said Cody Pueo Pata, a semiretired Hawaiian entertainer and recording artist, as we sat in a booth at Chiko's Tavern, a dim dive bar where the band had just launched into "Pua Ahihi."

Sure enough, a woman with a long brown ponytail glided to the front of the room and began spinning slowly, arms raised in the air, smile affixed to her face. When she finished, she kissed each of the four band members on the cheek and returned to her table.

Pata, cradling a bottle of Heineken, explained: "This music has never changed through four or five generations. It's our comfort."

The thought of Hawaiian music might evoke images of men in leis gently strumming songs for sun-baked tourists in Waikiki, and, well, it is sort of that. But on intensely musical Oahu, live Hawaiian music can be found nearly every night and in all directions: the coastal resorts, the small-town bars, the dives of Honolulu and, yes, Waikiki, for the tourist masses.

Hawaiian music is a long, languorous sound and wholly its own, but it also bears obvious ties to the folk, bluegrass, country and even mariachi genres. Its appeal is both in reflecting and fitting so seamlessly into the islands from where it comes.

Waikiki supplies some of the most traditional renderings of Hawaiian music, such as slack-key guitar master Cyril Pahinui, whose gentle strums can be found every Wednesday at the waterfront Outrigger Reef Hotel.

The Wednesday I found Pahinui, he wore a red button-front shirt and white lei, as did his fellow players — men on steel and acoustic guitar — at a small stage near the hotel pool on a warm January evening.

Between sets, I approached the stage, where Tom Campbell was buying Pahinui's latest CD and telling him, "We can't get this



PHOTOS BY JOSH NOEL/Chicago Tribune

Hawaiian music group Kekanuiwai plays in the heart of Waikiki with hula dancers every Wednesday.

back in Minnesota!"

"I'm sitting over there listening to that steel guitar, thinking, 'Oh my God, I have to take that home,'" said Campbell, of Minneapolis. "I can't take the flowers back, and I can't take the smells back, but I can take the music back."

Waikiki hotels do an admirable job of supporting traditional Hawaiian music; the Outrigger Reef is among the hot spots, with nightly concerts. And the band Kekanuiwai, a trio of men dressed in black with red leis, plays on Wednesday afternoons on a patio behind the Embassy Suites Waikiki Beach Walk, accompanied by hula dancers.

But to find the music played by locals for locals, head into town to a place like Corner Kitchen, the self-billed "musician's playground." Corner Kitchen features live music several nights of the week, and virtually all of the players have won a Na Hoku Hanohano award, the Hawaiian version of a Grammy. The restaurant sits just outside Waikiki but is a local haunt.

The evening I visited, Hoku Zuttermeister, who plays ukulele

and guitar, strummed through a series of gentle Hawaiian classics with a bass player at his side. Every other song or so, Zuttermeister's vocals would reach into a looping falsetto, a tenet of Hawaiian music.

After the show, Zuttermeister told me that, like many Hawaiians, he grew up surrounded by traditional Hawaiian music. But early in his career, it was difficult to play publicly.

"At one point you couldn't find

Hawaiian music anywhere," Zuttermeister said. "Then the clubs came in and it's starting to come back a little bit."

Where it has come back strongest are in the bars of Honolulu. Those are home to a fluid scene of musicians who swap in and out of multiple bands.

The night after Corner Kitchen, I visited Imus Lounge, a bar tucked into a strip mall about two miles from the heart of Waikiki. It's the kind of place you could

find only by seeking it out, and it was culturally riveting.

I took a seat at the bar and ordered a Guinness. There wasn't an open booth in the house, and if there were any other tourists there, I couldn't pick them out.

There were just four instruments — ukulele, upright bass and acoustic and steel guitars — but the musicians' frenetic strumming created a positively huge sound, like the joyful rumble of a musical freight train.

The next night I met up with Pata, who now focuses on Hawaiian arts education, at Chiko's, another delightfully dim Honolulu bar. That night's band also featured Ho'o, this time with different guitar and bass players, though the same steel guitar player sat in with them.

It was another gloriously raw and festive scene, the band plowing through its set and the crowd taking turns twirling to the jangly roar.

It was difficult to imagine mainlanders singing and dancing to the songs that also mattered to their grandparents.

The Hawaiian song catalog is hundreds of songs deep, and most of the players know most of the songs. Hence, they're able to create fluid set lists that sound almost like one long song.

"We all know the songs," Pata said. "We all love the songs."



Hoku Zuttermeister performs at Corner Kitchen, a restaurant in Honolulu where local musicians play most nights.

HEALTH & FITNESS

No sugarcoating

More experts warn of dangers of consuming sugar

By DAVID TEMPLETON
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Dr. Robert Lustig's YouTube lectures about the dangers of sugar have raised a few eyebrows in recent years and even drawn some criticism.

But the pediatric endocrinologist's proclamations are supported by research his team has done at the University of California, San Francisco, with steady confirmation from other scientific studies linking sugar with chronic disease and early death. Among his points are:

- **Sugar is poison.**
- **Sugar is unhealthful in any form.**
- **There are good calories and bad calories,** the latter including those from sugar.
- **Obesity is not a prerequisite for metabolic illness.** Eighty percent of those with obesity do have metabolic disease or resulting chronic illness. But 40 percent of people of normal weight also have such diseases.
- **Don't blame those who are obese or chronically ill for their conditions.** It's not so much poor lifestyle that creates obesity and illness as it is biochemical exposures to sugar and other unhealthful ingredients that manufacturers routinely put into food products, with consumers often being unaware.

Lustig's latest YouTube video, "Fat Chance: Fructose 2.0," has received 155,000 views and climbing. But his 2009 YouTube lecture, "Sugar: the Bitter Truth," which details the biological consequences of high fructose corn syrup, is approaching 4.5 million views. He also has two books on the topic.

But he defers to Will Smith — as Agent J in "Men in Black 3" — to answer the question Agent K (Tommy Lee Jones) asks: "What's the most destructive force in the universe?"

"Sugar?" Agent J says, with an inquisitive lift.

"He got it right," Lustig said. "We know these substances are addictive and hazardous to health. Hollywood knows this. Why don't you?"

Sugar is listed in Nutrition Facts food labels by 56 names, including various malts and syrups. Most people might be unaware that dextran, athyl maltol, treacle, panocha, lactose and sorbitol are names for sugar.

Fructose has drawn attention with the increased use of high fructose corn syrup in foods and soft drinks. The sweetener produced chemically from corn starch provides better texture and improves shelf life.

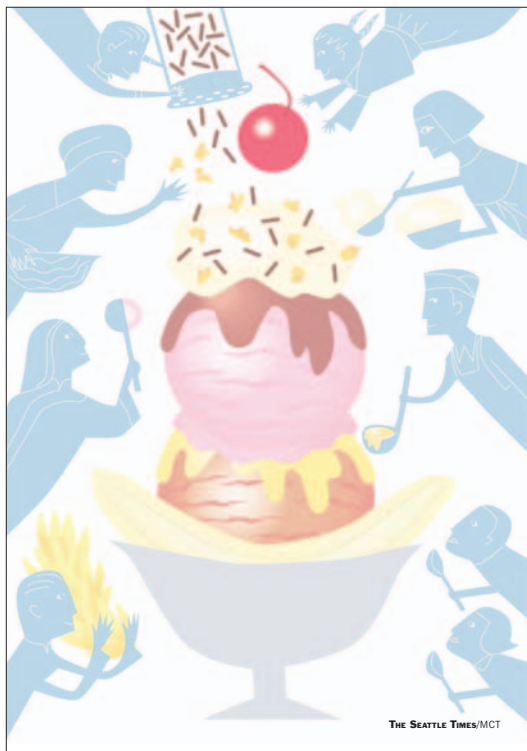
Sucrose, or table sugar, is half fructose, which is metabolized in the liver, and glucose, which is blood sugar that produces cellular energy to muscles and organs.

In the liver, excess fructose is transformed into fat, which can be a factor in elevated cholesterol and arterial plaque. High fructose corn syrup used in soft drinks has a 55-45 ratio of fructose to glucose.

Lustig says sugar is addictive, although not everyone agrees. Some researchers say people eat too much sugar routinely because of its overabundance in the American culture and diet.

A recent study by Lustig's team concludes that 25 percent of type 2 diabetes is caused by sugar consumption.

Studies also conclude that sugar consumption leads to fatty liver, high tri-



‘There definitely are a number of studies that show within big populations a big relationship between sugar consumption and every metabolic disease we have.’

Kimber Stanhope
nutritional biologist

differentiate between naturally occurring sugar in grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables from those added by the manufacturer for taste, texture or shelf life.

High fructose corn syrup is used in numerous processed foods, including many soft drinks, such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi.

Fructose in fruit isn't considered a health risk because levels are so low and because the fruit fiber slows the rate of metabolism. Sucrose is made up of equal amounts of glucose and fructose. Too much overwhelms the liver, which causes it to turn some of the fructose into fat.

"Fat can stay in the liver, which may interfere with the liver's ability to use insulin properly," Stanhope said. "This is called insulin resistance, and it increases risk for diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Or the liver can send the fat made from fructose into the blood stream where it can increase risk of cardiovascular disease."

While research likely will never provide absolute proof of sugar's impact on human health, studies reveal a close association between sugar consumption and metabolic disease. That among growing evidence from diet intervention studies raise red flags about its harm, Stanhope added.

In his latest video, Lustig noted that "old medicine" recognized infection as the main cause of disease with the vector being the various microbes — viruses, bacteria and fungi. Nowadays, he says, medicine must focus on chronic disease with the vector being "multinational corporations," if we place the blame on food manufacturing and marketing.

Food and beverage companies, meanwhile, maintain that there is no proof that consuming sugar makes a person more likely to get sick.

A Q&A on the Pepsico website quotes a person asking about the reported health risks of diets high in fructose.

"Some studies have found that consumption of unusually high amounts of pure fructose may trigger health concerns," Pepsico replies. "However, these concerns do not apply to HFCS (high fructose corn syrup). Despite its name, HFCS is not high in fructose. HFCS and table sugar contain about the same amount of fructose, and neither has been shown to be harmful."

But Stanhope, who consumes sugar only on special occasions (about once a month), said evidence is more than sufficient to advise people against its consumption.

"I think the data we have are strong but not definitive," she said. "People should be looking and listening and realizing that there are no risks associated with reducing sugar intake, but there may be risk in continuing to eat high amounts of sugar while waiting for more definitive scientific evidence. Parents should get their kids off sugar and they should get off sugar themselves."

glyceride and bad LDL cholesterol levels, plaque in blood vessels and insulin resistance leading to metabolic syndrome and diabetes.

"There definitely are a number of studies that show within big populations a big relationship between sugar consumption and every metabolic disease we have — diabetes, cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, fatty liver, hypertension and particular risk factors" of high cholesterol and triglycerides," said Kimber Stanhope, a University of California, Davis, nutritional biologist.

In February, a study published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine found that "most United States adults consume more added sugar than is recommended for a healthy diet," with findings of "a significant relationship between added sugar consumption and increased risk for cardiovascular disease mortality."

Those whose added sugar consumption was more than 10 percent but below 25 percent of daily calories face a 30 percent higher risk of cardiovascular disease than those whose sugar consumption was less than 10 percent. The risk of cardiovascular

disease nearly tripled for those whose diet consisted of 25 percent or more of added sugar, according to the study.

The study also said that findings were largely consistent across age groups, gender, race or ethnicity (except for non-Hispanic African-Americans), education, physical activity and body mass index.

"A higher percentage of calories from added sugar is associated with significantly increased risk of cardiovascular disease mortality," the study concludes. "In addition, regular consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is associated with elevated cardiovascular mortality."

"Our results support current recommendations to limit the intake of calories from added sugars in U.S. diets," it concludes.

The American Heart Association recommends fewer than 100 calories of sugar daily for women and 150 calories a day for men — about 5 percent or less of total daily calories.

New Nutrition Facts labels proposed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, expected to be in place in two years, would require companies to list not only total sugar but also "added sugar" to help people

THE SEATTLE TIMES/MCT

LIFESTYLE

They're in it to win it

Serious sweepstakes enthusiasts find persistence pays off in prizes

By JEREMY THOMAS
Contra Costa Times

Each day at about 8 a.m., retired grandmother and occasional actress Mary Lu Marr flips on the TV, pulls out her trusty laptop and gets to work at her "part-time job."

For the next few hours, the Dublin, Calif., woman will enter hundreds of sweepstakes, filling out forms and transcribing product codes. This has been her hobby for more than 40 years, and persistence has paid off—she has won cruises, a car, home theaters, even a year's supply of Godiva chocolates.

Her latest haul came in February with a \$50,000 grand prize from lunch meat maker Carl Buddig.

"I really don't know anyone else who does it like I do," Marr said. "It's obsessive."

But she isn't alone. Industry experts believe there may be hundreds of thousands of Americans just like her. They even have a word for the phenomenon—"sweepers."

"The term 'sweeper' is someone who enters sweepstakes as a hobby," said Carolyn Wilman, a Canadian author of two books on the subject. "It's no different than sitting around with trains or coins or whatever people do for fun, except ours can take you on crazy adventures."

Wilman, who calls herself "The Contest Queen," attended her first sweepstakes convention in 2005. A daily sweeper, she occasionally wins big, like her trip to the 2010 Winter Olympics, or a costume party dinner on the Hogwarts set during a London filming of a "Harry Potter" adventure.

"You're always waiting for the call or email," Wilman said. "I'm probably the only person who looks forward to Mondays because that's when the mail service starts back up."

An estimated 55 million Americans enter sweepstakes each year, according to one industry guide. The contests serve a purpose—companies collect personal data on those who enter and generate brand interest.

Thanks to the Internet, what once took extreme sweepers much time and postage is now as easy as a few clicks of the mouse.

To keep tabs on giveaways, sweepers turn to online or print newsletters. Craig McDaniel, a.k.a. "Mr. Sweepy," is president



PHOTOS BY DOUG DURAN/Bay Area News Group

Above: Mary Lu Marr, of Dublin, Calif., poses with a few of the items she has won playing sweepstakes online. Left: Robert Hoffman, of Castro Valley, Calif., shows some of his prizes from entering more than 400,000 sweepstakes



—average 50 daily entries.

"The first thing they do is get their coffee and get started," McDaniel said. "The downside is while there are a lot of people who take the hobby seriously, a lot will get burned out before they even begin. They think 'I'm not lucky' and they quit."

Robert Hoffman, of Castro Valley, Calif., is an extreme sweeper with lifetime sweep earnings of more than \$1 million.

On a typical morning, he rises before dawn, grabs a cup of joe, and starts on his sweeps. Then, armed with envelopes and contest announcements, he boards a bus for work in San Francisco,

signing up for more on the ride. He mails in more than a dozen entries a day, plus 50 to 100 online.

"You can't win if you don't enter," he said.

Hoffman first got hooked in the 1970s, winning a gas station drawing for free fuel. He's gone on dozens of free getaways, including the Super Bowl, NCAA Final Four and Hong Kong, won gasoline for life and driven a NASCAR on the Charlotte Motor Speedway.

His latest win went to his son Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors.

Nothing comes free, though; he spends thousands on mailings each year, and one year his tax bill on winnings topped \$35,000.

Though the rewards can be plentiful, Hoffman said it takes a special person to stick with it.

"There's a lot of people who want to learn how to get something for nothing. The fact is that there's a lot of work and money that goes into it," he said. "If you do this more than two years, chances are you have an obsessive, addictive personality, just because of the sheer magnitude of what you need to do."

Talk like a sweeper

- **Sweeper:** Someone who enters sweepstakes as a hobby.
- **Affly:** Short for "affidavit" used to identify the winner.
- **ARV:** Average Retail Value, comes to bear when it's time to pay the IRS.
- **Dumpster diver:** One who scavenges through trash seeking bottle caps, game pieces or points from sponsors.
- **Early Bird prizes:** Be one of the first to enter the sweepstakes and you're guaranteed a win.
- **FSOT:** For Sale or Trade. Expressed when someone wins a prize they can't use.
- **GLTA:** "Good Luck to All." A goodwill expression used when discussing new sweepstakes, sharing tips, etc.
- **Hall of Fame:** A win with an ARV of more than \$5,000.
- **IWG:** Instant win game.
- **Snails:** Mail-in entries.
- **Vote for Me:** A contest in which entrants asks the public to vote for their entries so they can get the most votes.

Source: Contests.about.com

MOVIES

I'M SURE, IF PEOPLE TRIED TO HANDICAP ME AGAINST ALL THE ACTORS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE COMPARED ME TO, WHEN WE FIRST STARTED, IT WOULD BE INTERESTING."

— Kevin Costner

FOR LOVE OF THE GAME

Sports-movie veteran Kevin Costner tackles the NFL in 'Draft Day,' reflects on the ups and downs of making films

BY STEVEN REA
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Kevin Costner is the general manager of the Cleveland Browns in his new movie, "Draft Day." The Ivan Reitman-directed project — a kind of gridiron "Moneyball" — takes place on that fateful spring day when the 32 teams in the NFL go hunting for the cream of the year's college crop, signing, trading, strategizing, looking to fill holes in their lineups and, hopefully, find the real talent out there, and the players their competition might have missed.

The NFL Draft has become a big deal in its own right, a spectator sport, with the successive rounds of picks taking place over a long weekend. (The 2014 draft: May 8-10 on the NFL Network.)

Costner, who has had a good run when it comes to sports movies — "Field of Dreams" and "Bull Durham" (baseball), "Tin Cup" (golf) — related to "Draft Day's" go-my-own-way protagonist, Sonny Weaver Jr., a GM being second-guessed by just about everyone from his coaches to his coworker and lover (Jennifer Garner) to his mom (Ellen Burstyn).

Costner, 59, has been in movies since the start of the '80s ("Prat Boy #1" in Ron Howard's "Night Shift" was an early job). He was Elliot Ness in "The Untouchables" (1987) and received best actor, director and picture Oscar nominations for his 1990 Lakota Indian epic, "Dances with Wolves." He won the directing and picture Academy Awards.

Costner did not miss the parallels between the handicapping, prospecting and deal-making that goes on in "Draft Day," and the handicapping, prospecting and deal-making that goes on in the movie biz.

"I'm sure, if people tried to handicap me against all the actors that you would have compared me to, when we first started, it would be interesting," the actor ruminated on the phone from Los Angeles recently. "How many have

just fallen off the cliff, so to speak — the ones that never went past one or two movies?"

"How do you handicap that when you look at someone? You know, how do you measure it? You'd be mistaken if you did it by looks. You'd be mistaken if you did it by height. ... And you'd be mistaken if you did it by what everybody else said versus what you think."

He adds: "You have to analyze talent, and see if people have a genuine love. You know, if somebody's just in love with the red carpet, chances are that's what they're going to follow. They're just in love with the fame, and that quickly fades, because it's about longevity, it's not about the moment. If you just feel like you're going to be popular your whole life, that's unlikely."

Costner certainly has had his ups and downs. "Waterworld" (1995) and "The Postman" (1997) are famous flops; the History Channel's 2012 "Hatfields & McCoys" miniseries, a huge hit; the 2010 ensemble piece "Company Men," a critical hit. He was Clark Kent's adoptive dad in last year's "Superman" reboot, "Man of Steel."

So far in 2014, he's had three features in the multiplexes.

Costner is a veteran CIA guy opposite Chris Pine in "Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit," released in January, and a veteran CIA guy opposite Amber Heard in February's "3 Days to Kill." In the former, his was a supporting role; in the latter, he was the star.

Costner, who lives in Santa Barbara, Calif., has two films in the bank. One is "McFarland," directed by "Whale Rider's" Niki Caro and coming from Disney, with the star in the title role — a high school track coach working with a group of mostly poor Latino kids whose families are farm laborers.

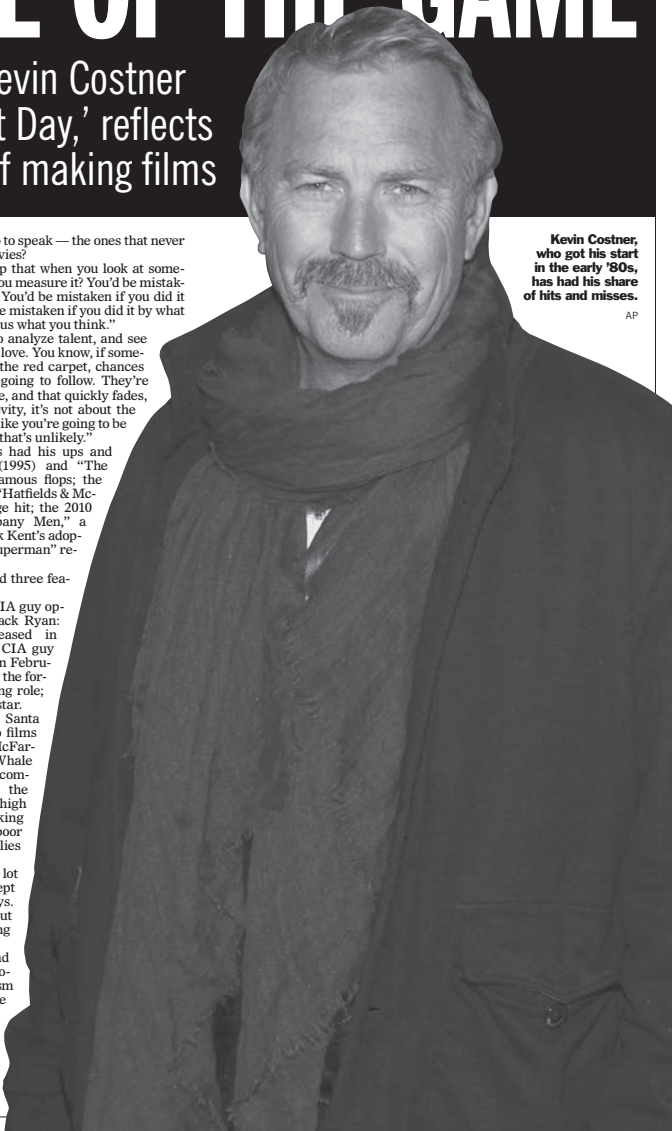
"They don't have a lot going for them except their big hearts," he says. "So it's a true story about cross-country running here in California."

The other, "Black and White," is a contemporary drama with racism as its central theme. He financed it himself.

"No one really wanted to make it, but I felt it was an important movie to make. And I thought it was very entertaining," he says.

Kevin Costner, who got his start in the early '80s, has had his share of hits and misses.

AP



NATION



AP photos

The former Willow Run Bomber Plant at Willow Run Airport in Ypsilanti Township, Mich., where Rosie the Riveter became an icon of American female empowerment during World War II, went back to making automobiles after the war and closed for good in 2010.

Plant where female worker became a face of war effort faces demolition



"Rosie the Riveter" was introduced as a symbol of patriotic women joining the workforce during World War II.

By MIKE HOUSEHOLDER
The Associated Press

DETROIT — A group trying to save the Detroit-area factory where Rosie the Riveter became an icon of American female empowerment during World War II said March 28 that it must raise \$1.5 million within a few weeks to save the site from being demolished.

Those behind the Save the Bomber Plant campaign said they have raised \$6.5 million of the \$8 million they need by May 1 to buy the Willow Run Bomber Plant west of Detroit. They want to convert the factory where Rose Will Monroe and other workers built B-24 bombers into a museum dedicated to aviation and the countless other Rosies who toiled at similar U.S. plants to aid the war effort.

The group has received several extensions by which to acquire a portion of the old plant, but the time has come either to raise the necessary money or see it relegated to the history books, said Dennis Norton, the president of the Michigan Aerospace Foundation and one of the leaders of the effort to save the plant.

"They need an answer from us," Norton said, referring to the trust set up to oversee properties owned by a pre-bankruptcy General Motors. "Demolition is underway, and they can't stop demolishing the

plant, then come back later."

Norton and his team want to separate and preserve 175,000 square feet of the Ypsilanti Township, Mich., site and convert it into a new, expanded home for the Yankee Air Museum, which would move from its current location less than 2 miles away. Included would be the iconic, 150-foot-wide doors through which thousands of bombers left the plant to play their role in winning the war.

Although women performed what had been male-dominated roles in plants all over the country during the war, it was Monroe, who was one of an untold number of women in the Willow Run plant's 40,000-person workforce, who caught the eye of Hollywood producers casting a "riveter" for a government film about the war effort at home.

Monroe, a Kentucky native who moved to Michigan during the war, starred as herself in the film and became one of the best-known figures of that era. She represented the thousands of Rosies who took factory jobs making munitions, weaponry and other things while the nation's men were off fighting in Europe and the Pacific.

Although many Rosies were let go once the war was over and the soldiers returned home, they had shown that women were capable of doing jobs that traditionally had been done by only men. An illus-

trated poster of a determined-looking Rosie the Riveter rolling up her sleeve with the slogan, "We can do it," became an iconic symbol of female empowerment for American women.

The Willow Run factory went back to making automobiles after the war ended, and it did so for more than a half-century under the General Motors name before closing for good in 2010.

Michael Montgomery, a consultant on the fundraising effort, said it's important to save the plant where Monroe and her fellow workers labored because it is "one of the birthplaces of modern America." In addition to churning out a bomber every hour, he said, workers of different races and sexes worked side-by-side for equal pay — an achievement that would be acknowledged at a reconstituted Yankee Air Museum.

Montgomery said he is "guardedly optimistic," that the group can raise the rest of the money during the next few weeks, and Norton gave the group "a 75 percent chance of pulling it off."

Meetings with some "major donor prospects" have been scheduled, Montgomery said, and the campaign planned public events designed to generate some cash as well as awareness.

BUSINESS/STRIPES

Target hackers may take years to find

By BREE FOWLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Secret Service investigators say they are close to gaining a full understanding of the methods hackers used to breach retailer Target's computer systems last December.

But the agency says it could take years to identify the criminals who stole some 40 million debit and credit card numbers of Target shoppers and other personal information from as many as 70 million people in the pre-Christmas breach.

And it may take even longer to bring the offenders to justice. The federal investigation is complicated by the international nature of high-profile digital heists. The perpetrators likely are located overseas, which makes extradition and prosecution difficult. As a result, the Secret Service is focused on monitoring the online activities of its suspects in hopes they'll be able to arrest them at an opportune moment, said Ari Baranoff, an assistant special agent in charge with the Secret Service's criminal investigative division.

"We take a lot of pride in having a lot of patience," Baranoff said during a rare sit-down interview with the Associated Press at the agency's headquarters in Washington. "There are individuals we've apprehended that we've known about for 10 years and we're very comfortable identifying these individuals, sitting back and waiting patiently until the opportunity arrives that we can apprehend them."

Target says it can't yet estimate what the breach will cost the company, but some analysts put it at nearly half a billion dollars. The total cost of the breach — which also would include losses incurred by banks, consumers and others — could easily reach into the billions of dollars.

Target, which is in the midst of its own investigation, has said very little about the breach. It happened, except that it believes the thieves gained entry to its systems

by infiltrating computers owned by one of its vendors, thought to be a Pittsburgh-area heating-and-refrigeration business.

Baranoff couldn't speak specifically about the federal investigation into the Target breach because the case is ongoing, but he talked candidly about the growing threat of large-scale, financially motivated cybercrimes and the Secret Service's efforts to stop them.

Behind every major breach, there's usually a team of highly specialized cybercriminals who mainly know each other through online nicknames and reputations. Most aren't motivated by politics, just greed, Baranoff said.

If the hackers do invest in anything, it's their own operations. An increasing number are building their own server farms, sometimes leasing space to other criminals, making it harder for law enforcement to track them down.

Further complicating matters, Baranoff said the vast majority of high-level cybercriminals tend

to be Russian speakers based in former Soviet and Eastern European countries, which largely puts them out of the reach of U.S. authorities.

But the Secret Service has strong ties with cybercrime agencies in many countries — including The Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom — and has found others to be helpful as well, even if they don't have extradition treaties with the United States.

MARKET WATCH

April 17, 2014

Dow Jones Industrials	-16.31
Nasdaq composite	9.29
Standard & Poor's 500	2.54
Russell 2000	6.13
S&P 500	1,137.90

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (April 21)	\$1.4205
Dollar buys (April 21)	€0.7040
British pound (April 21)	\$1.72
Japanese yen (April 21)	100.00
South Korean won (April 21)	1,011.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.6790/0.9953
Canada (dollar)	1.1015
China (Yuan)	6.2193
Denmark (Krone)	5.4025
Egypt (Pound)	0.9925
Hong Kong (Dollar)	\$1.3821/0.7236
Hungary (Forint)	221.86
India (Shekel)	3.4796
Japan (Yen)	102.39
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2816
Norway (Krone)	5.9835
Philippines (Peso)	44.34
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.03
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2525
South Korea (Won)	1,038.50
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8828
Taiwan (Dollar)	32.20
Turkey (New Lira)	2,1302

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchases by U.S. military banking facility, Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to the dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	4.00
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.04
30-year bond	3.52

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Saturday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Able, Tex	77	57	Cir	Chatanooga	73	46	Cir	Fort Wayne	63	38	Cir	Louisville	73	48	Cir
Akron, Ohio	59	36	Cir	Cheyenne	63	43	Cir	Fresno	84	55	PCldy	Lubbock	74	53	Cir
Albany, N.Y.	49	35	PCldy	Chicago	62	36	Cir	Goodland	74	48	Cir	Macon	63	48	Cir
Albuquerque	71	52	Cir	Cincinnati	58	44	Cir	Grand Junction	68	49	Cir	Madison	66	33	PCldy
Allentown, Pa.	65	38	PCldy	Cleveland	55	37	PCldy	Grand Rapids	60	32	Cir	Medford	71	42	PCldy
Anchorage	49	30	Cir	Colorado Springs	65	46	Cir	Great Falls	64	31	Cir	Memphis	77	50	Cir
Asheville	58	43	Cir	Columbia, S.C.	58	51	Rain	Green Bay	68	49	Cir	Miami Beach	86	73	PCldy
Atlanta	62	47	Cir	Columbus, Ga.	55	49	Cir	Greensboro, N.C.	66	44	Cir	Midland-Odesa	76	59	Cir
Atlantic City	66	41	Cir	Columbus, Ohio	64	43	Cir	Harrisburg	63	40	PCldy	Milwaukee	54	33	PCldy
Baltimore	66	42	PCldy	Concord, N.H.	62	32	Cir	Hartford Spfld	61	39	PCldy	Minneapolis	66	42	Rain
Baton Rouge	79	57	PCldy	Copus Christi	78	63	Cir	Honolulu	66	34	Cir	Missoula	66	27	PCldy
Bilings	66	36	PCldy	Dallas-Ft Worth	79	69	Cir	Houston	80	59	Cir	Montgomery	72	48	Cir
Birmingham	73	47	Cir	Dayton	63	41	Cir	Huntsville	77	49	Cir	Nashville	75	49	Cir
Bismarck	61	35	PCldy	Daytona Beach	74	68	Cir	Indianapolis	66	43	Cir	New Orleans	75	58	PCldy
Boise	73	38	Cir	Denver	64	48	Cir	Jacksonville	77	48	Cir	New York City	65	41	Cir
Boston	60	39	PCldy	Des Moines	75	46	PCldy	Jacksonville	67	50	Cir	Newark	65	41	Cir
Bridgeport	63	38	Cir	Detroit	53	36	Cir	Jacksonville	67	50	Cir	Norfolk, Va.	60	45	Cir
Brownsville	81	65	Cir	Duluth	46	27	Cir	Janeau	52	33	PCldy	Norfolk, Va.	60	45	Cir
Buffalo	54	34	Cir	El Paso	77	59	PCldy	Kansas City	75	48	PCldy	North Platte	69	48	Cir
Burlington, Vt.	48	31	Cir	Elkins	66	40	PCldy	Kansas City	75	48	PCldy	Oklahoma City	66	53	Cir
Caribou, Maine	46	29	Snow	Erie	49	34	Cir	Knoxville	71	46	PCldy	Omaha	78	51	PCldy
Casper, Wyo.	65	36	PCldy	Evansville	60	41	Rain	Lake Charles	78	58	PCldy	Orlando	79	67	Cir
Charleston, S.C.	67	54	Cir	Fairbanks	50	24	PCldy	Las Vegas	85	63	PCldy	Pasadena	76	48	Cir
Charleston, W.Va.	70	46	PCldy	Fargo	63	41	Cir	Lexington	72	48	Cir	Piedmont	69	43	PCldy
Charlotte, N.C.	59	45	Rain	Flagstaff	59	35	Cir	Lincoln	78	52	Cir	Philadelphia	67	43	PCldy
				Flint	56	30	PCldy	Little Rock	76	51	PCldy	Phoenix	87	64	Cir
				Fort Smith	77	52	Cir	Los Angeles	71	57	PCldy	Pittsburgh	59	41	Cir

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

National temperature extremes
Hi: Thu., 104, Death Valley, Calif.
Lo: Thu., 3, near Baker Lake, Maine



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SPORTS BRIEFS

Mariners' Choi suspended for 50 games

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Seattle Mariners first baseman Ji-Man Choi has been suspended for 50 games following a positive test for a performance-enhancing substance.

The urine sample was collected from Choi before March 28, when Major League Baseball and the players' union increased the penalty for a first positive doping test to 80 games.

MLB said on Thursday the South Korean tested positive for methandienone, a controlled substance popular with bodybuilders.

The 22-year-old Choi was hitting .394 at Triple-A Tacoma with one homer and five RBIs.

Choi became the third player suspended this year under the big league program following Yankees star Alex Rodriguez and Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Alex Colome.

"I do not know what I could have taken that caused me to test positive," Choi said in a statement issued by the union. "However, I also understand that without an explanation I must serve a suspension and I accept that."

In other baseball news:

■ St. Louis Cardinals right-hander Joe Kelly has been put on the 15-day disabled list with a strained left hamstring.

Kelly got hurt while trying to beat out a bunt attempt in the fourth inning of the Cardinals' 5-1 loss to the Milwaukee Brewers on Wednesday. He is 1-1 with a 0.59 ERA in three starts this season.

■ Mark Teixeira could be back in the New York Yankees' lineup Sunday.

The first baseman walked twice, struck out and scored a run Thursday in his first extended spring training game since injuring his right leg.

Teixeira is eligible to come off the 15-day disabled Sunday, when the Yankees finish a four-game series against Tampa Bay.

"I'll be ready Sunday," Teixeira said. "I will be fully ready to play Sunday and will be very disappointed if I don't."

Infielder Brendan Ryan, on the disabled list since opening day due to a pinched nerve in his upper back, said he will play in his first extended spring training game Friday and will get three at-bats.

Ryan is hopeful of being ready to rejoin the Yankees in 10 days to two weeks.

Closer David Robertson had a bullpen session before Thursday night's game against the Rays and is to pitch in an extended spring



JOSHUA PAUL/AP

Pablo Larrazabal, left, jumps into a lake after being attacked by a swarm of hornets during the second round of the Malaysian Open tournament at Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club on Friday.

training game Saturday. On the disabled list due to a left groin strain, Robertson is expected to return Tuesday.

Robertson said he hasn't felt any discomfort in the last five days.

■ Padres pitcher Josh Johnson will have his right elbow examined by noted orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews next week.

The right-hander is on the 15-day disabled list with a strained forearm. The Padres fear his initial injury may be worse than originally diagnosed.

San Diego manager Bud Black said Johnson will meet with Andrews in Birmingham, Ala., on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Andrews performed Tommy John surgery on Johnson's same elbow in 2007.

Ex-quarterback McNabb spends day in jail

MESA, Ariz. — Former NFL quarterback Donovan McNabb was released Thursday from an Arizona jail after serving a one-day sentence for a DUI arrest late last year.

Records released by West Mesa Justice Court show McNabb served his time Wednesday and was released about 1:30 a.m. Thursday.

McNabb, 37, was arrested Dec. 15 in the Salt River Pima-Mari-

copa Indian Community east of Phoenix, according to court records.

A copy of the citation shows McNabb was stopped on the Loop 101 freeway just after 3 a.m. and radar clocked his Range Rover at 81 mph in a 65-mph zone. He also was cited for DUI, but no information about blood-alcohol level was on the citation.

McNabb pleaded guilty on March 27 and nine days of his sentence was suspended.

Court documents show McNabb was ordered to pay a nearly \$1,500 fine and enter an outpatient treatment program in Scottsdale from April 10 to July 8.

In other NFL news:

■ Indianapolis police have arrested Jacksonville Jaguars wide receiver Tandon Doss on a disorderly conduct charge, but he will not be prosecuted.

A police report says the 24-year-old Doss was "out of control" and arrested during a disturbance with another man Wednesday afternoon. The report provided no additional details on the incident. Police spokesman Sgt. Kendale Adams said he also had no details.

Adams said the Marion County Prosecutor's Office declined to file charges.

■ The Jacksonville Jaguars have released veteran linebacker

Russell Allen after he failed a physical.

Allen started 29 games the last two seasons. He missed the final two games last year because of a concussion.

The team also released third-year defensive end D'Aundre Reed, second-year defensive end Will Perick and first-year receiver Jabin Sambrano.

■ Former NFL All-Pro safety Darren Sharper lost his bid Thursday to be released on bail in a sexual assault case after an Arizona judge found there's enough evidence to move forward with charges against him in that state.

Sharper's lawyers had questioned the evidence authorities are using to justify keeping him in jail in California, where he faces separate charges that he drugged and raped two women in October after meeting them at a West Hollywood nightclub.

A California judge had set Sharper's bail at \$1 million but ruled in March that Sharper should remain in jail without bail after the Super Bowl champion was indicted in Arizona on charges that he drugged and sexually assaulted two women in November.

His lawyers had hoped to win a favorable ruling from the Arizona judge to persuade the California judge to set him free on bail.

Kuchar builds on Masters momentum

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina — Matt Kuchar continued his stellar play from the Masters by putting together a strong start at the RBC Heritage, shooting a 5-under 66 on Thursday to share the first-round lead with Scott Langley and William McGirt.

There also was no major let-down for Masters runner-up Jordan Spieth, who opened with a 69, part of a large group tied for fifth at Harbour Town Golf Links.

Kuchar and Spieth were in contention for much of the first round last Sunday at Augusta National before fading. But neither player allowed any lingering disappointment or fatigue from a grueling week to slow them down here.

In other golf news:

■ Angela Stanford shot an 8-under 64 on a wind-swept course to take a one-stroke lead after the second round of the LPGA LOTTE Championship in Honolulu on Thursday.

Hawaii favorite Michelle Wie was one stroke back after a 67 that included five birdies.

Christie Kerr, a 16-time tour winner, shot a 66 and was tied for third with three others at 138. Among them was top-ranked Inbee Park, who shot a 68.

Nadal loses in Monte Carlo quarterfinals

PARIS — Rafael Nadal's mastery of the Monte Carlo clay courts seems to be over.

The top-ranked Spaniard hopes his confidence isn't gone, too.

Nadal lost to fellow Spaniard David Ferrer 7-6 (1), 6-4 in the quarterfinals of the Monte Carlo Masters on Friday, his earliest exit since 2003 at a tournament that helped build his reputation as perhaps the greatest clay-court player of all time. Nadal won eight consecutive titles here from 2005-12, before losing to Novak Djokovic in last year's final.

The sixth-seeded Ferrer next faces the eighth-seeded Stanislas Wawrinka, who reached his first semifinal since the Australian Open by beating eighth-seeded Milos Raonic of Canada 7-6 (5), 6-2. Fourth-seeded Roger Federer also reached the last four in an error-strewn 2-6, 7-6 (6), 6-1 win against No. 9 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France, where he was two points from defeat at 0-30 serving at 6-5 down in the second set.

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STEVE HELMER/AP

Darrell Wallace Jr., right, winner of Saturday's NASCAR Camping World Truck race, smiles as he listens to Wendell Scott Jr., left, during a news conference at Martinsville Speedway in Martinsville, Va. Wallace Jr. was the first black driver to win a NASCAR race since the 1960s when he took the checkered flag in a Truck Series race at Martinsville.

NASCAR notebook

Wallace Jr. out to become Tiger Woods of NASCAR

BY DAN GELSTON
The Associated Press

Darrell Wallace Jr. was the first black driver to win a NASCAR race since the 1960s when he took the checkered flag in a Truck Series race at Martinsville last year. The 20-year-old Wallace, who goes by Bubba, has openly talked of becoming the Tiger Woods of NASCAR — the great black star who can transcend the sport and prove people of all colors can race. He rebounded from a crash in the season-opening Truck race at Daytona to finish second at Martinsville last month.

"We're trying to carry that momentum from Martinsville on to Kansas, so it's a little tough," Wallace said. "But I'm trying to have fun as much as I can, getting in and out of the shop as much as I can, checking on the progress of all the trucks that are being built."

Wallace drives the No. 54 Toyota for Kyle Busch Motorsports, which has perks. He can learn from one of the best drivers across all three NASCAR series. But the drawback is that Busch usually dominates when he jumps down to the Truck Series. Busch won five times last season, has one win this year and 36 in his career.

"The most frustrating thing about last year is looking back at how many races we were faster than Kyle," Wallace said. "Every race it seemed like we wrecked

out, he would win. So there were a couple of races that we should have had on our win list. But that's just part of the rookie blues and the rookie stripes. So I definitely know what I have to do now this year and use that as motivation to get out there and perform better. I'm using our motto. It's just better every finish from last year."

NASCAR has initiated several pushes toward boosting the number of minorities in the sport. There's a Drive for Diversity program that paid some dividends with Wallace and Kyle Larson after struggling to find racers for the top series. The program is 11 years old and was designed to attract minorities and women to the sport in all fields, from the track to the front office. He was also part of NASCAR's "Next!" class of up-and-coming drivers.

"You get to do so many things that you didn't think you'd be able to do," Wallace said. "It's just a lot of fun to be able to race with your peers and be along with them. And at such a young age group, you get to have a lot of fun."

Live qualifying: Live, from Talladega, it's NASCAR qualifying on network TV.

The May 3 NASCAR Sprint Cup knockout qualifying session from Talladega Superspeedway will be aired on Fox — believed to be the first time the session will be televised live on network TV other than the Daytona 500.

"This move is a direct result of the double-digit ratings gains NASCAR's new knockout qualifying format is delivering every weekend," said Bill Wanger, executive vice president of programming, research & content strategy. "We are thrilled to be able to highlight this new format on Fox, and what more exciting place to do that than Talladega Superspeedway."

NASCAR made numerous changes for this season, including a tweaked qualifying process in an effort to live up what had become a monotonous part of race weekend.

Instead of going out one at a time, the entire field gets a 30-minute session to post their fastest lap, with the top 12 moving on to a 10-minute second round. On bigger tracks, the qualifying will have three sessions, with the field cut to 24 then 12.

Jadotte departs: Marcus Jadotte, who was vice president of public affairs and multicultural development, has left NASCAR.

Jadotte led the development of the NASCAR Drive for Diversity (D4D) and NASCAR Pit Crew Development programs. These initiatives focus on developing the skills of promising female, Asian, Latino and African-American drivers and crew members in NASCAR.

NASCAR's Drive for Diversity program will continue under Executive Vice President Steve O'Donnell.

Around the track

SPRINT CUP

Next race: Toyota Owners 400, April 26, Richmond International Raceway, Richmond, Va.
Last week: Kevin Harvick won the Southern 500 at Darlington to become the first repeat winner this season. Dale Earnhardt Jr. was second.
Online: nascar.com

NATIONWIDE SERIES

Next race: ToyotaCare 250, April 25, Richmond International Raceway, Richmond, Va.
Last week: Chase Elliott won at Darlington for his second straight series victory. He's the 18-year-old son of NASCAR great Bill Elliott.
Online: nascar.com

CAMPING WORLD TRUCK

Next race: SFP 250, May 9, Kansas Speedway, Kansas City, Mo.
Last race: Defending series champion Matt Crafton won the rain-delayed race at Martinsville on March 30 for his fourth career victory. Darrell Wallace was second.
Online: nascar.com

FORMULA ONE

This week: Chinese Grand Prix at Shanghai, China.
Track: Shanghai International Circuit (road course, 3.39 miles).
Race distance: 189.7 miles, 56 laps.
April 12: Ferrari's Fernando Alonso pulled away for a 10-second victory.
Last race: Lewis Hamilton won in Bahrain on April 6 for his second straight victory, beating Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg by a second.
Fast facts: The race is the fourth of the season. Rosberg won the season-opening race in Australia and also was second behind Hamilton in Malaysia. ... Hermann Tilke and Peter Wahl designed the track. The course is shaped like the Chinese character "shang," which stands for "high" or "above."
Next race: Spanish Grand Prix, May 11, Circuit de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain
Online: formula1.com

NHRA MELLO YELLO DRAG RACING

Next event: O'Reilly Auto Parts NHRA Spring Nationals, April 25-27, Royal Purple Raceway, Baytown, Texas.
Last week: Robert Hight became the first driver to win a Funny Car winner in the NHRA Four-Wide Nationals, beating John Force, Alexis DeJoria and Tim Wilkerson in the final. Antron Brown won the Top Fuel division, Sweden's Jimmy Alton topped the Pro Stock field to become the first European winner in the series, and Andrew Hines won in Pro Stock Motorcycle.
Online: nhra.com

VERIZON INDYCAR

Next race: Grand Prix of Alabama, April 27, Barber Motorsports Park, Birmingham, Ala.
Last week: Mike Conway won at Long Beach for Ed Carpenter Racing, taking the lead when Scott Dixon stopped for fuel two laps from the finish.
Online: indycar.com
— The Associated Press

Driver standings

1. Jeff Gordon	297
2. Matt Kenseth	296
3. Carl Edwards	278
4. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	271
5. Jimmie Johnson	270
6. Kyle Busch	269
7. Brad Keselowski	246
8. Joey Logano	245
9. Ryan Newman	236
10. Austin Dillon	235
11. Greg Biffle	227
12. Tony Stewart	224
13. Brian Vickers	224
14. Kyle Larson	223
15. Denny Hamlin	223
16. Clint Bowyer	219
17. Marcos Ambrose	216
18. Paul Menard	206
19. A.J. Allmendinger	202
20. Jamie McMurray	195

Sprint Cup schedule

Feb. 23 — Daytona 500 (Dale Earnhardt Jr.)
March 2 — The Profit on CNBC 500, Avondale, Ariz. (Kevin Harvick)
March 9 — Kobalt 400, Las Vegas (Brad Keselowski)
March 16 — Food City 500, Bristol, Tenn. (Carl Edwards)
March 23 — Auto Club 400, Fontana, Calif. (Kyle Busch)
March 30 — STP 500, Ridgeway, Va. (Kurt Busch)
April 7 — Duck Commander 500, Fort Worth, Texas (Joey Logano)
April 12 — Bojangles' Southern 500, Darlington, S.C. (Kevin Harvick)
April 26 — Toyota Owners 400, Richmond, Va.
May 10 — Aaron's 499, Talladega, Ala.
May 18 — Kansas 400, Kansas City, Kan.
May 25 — Coca-Cola 600, Concord, N.C.
June 1 — Dover 400, Dover, Del.
June 8 — Pocono 400, Long Pond, Pa.
June 15 — Quicken Loans 400, Brooklyn, Mich.
June 22 — Toyota/Save Mart 350, Sonoma, Calif.
June 28 — Quaker State 400, Sparta, N.J.
July 5 — Coke Zero 400, Daytona Beach, Fla.
July 13 — Camping World RV Sales 301, Loudon, N.H.
July 27 — The Brickyard 400, Indianapolis.
Aug. 3 — GoBowling.com 400, Long Beach, Pa.
Aug. 10 — Chevrolet 355 at the Glen, Watkins Glen, N.Y.
Aug. 17 — Pure Michigan 400, Brooklyn, Mich.
Aug. 23 — Irwin Tools Night Race, Bristol, Tenn.
Aug. 31 — Atlanta 500, Hampton, Ga.
Sept. 6 — Federated Auto Parts 400, Richmond, Va.
Sept. 14 — Chicagoland 400, Joliet, Ill.
Sept. 21 — Sylva 300, Loudon, N.H.
Sept. 28 — AAA 400, Dover, Del.
Oct. 5 — Hollywood Casino 400, Kansas City, Kan.
Oct. 11 — Bank of America 500, Concord, N.C.
Oct. 19 — GEICO 500, Talladega, Ala.
Oct. 26 — Goody's Headache Relief Shot 500, Ridgeway, Va.
Nov. 2 — AAA Texas 500, Fort Worth, Texas
Nov. 9 — Quicken Loans 500, Avondale, Ariz.
Nov. 16 — Ford EcoBoost 400, Homestead, Fla.

NHL PLAYOFFS



JEFF ROBERSON/AF

St. Louis' Alexander Steen, left, is congratulated by teammate David Backes after scoring the game-winning goal Thursday during the third overtime of Game 1 of a first-round playoff series against Chicago in St. Louis. The Blues won 4-3. St. Louis outshot the defending Stanley Cup champions 52-42.

Roundup

Blues tired, happy

St. Louis takes Game 1 from Chicago in 3OT

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — In the first period, Ryan Miller looked like the goalie who limped home 0-5. For the final 80 minutes, 26 seconds, the St. Louis Blues saw the cool, confident backstop they acquired to make the deep playoff run they've long sought.

Miller allowed three goals on seven shots in the first period, then shut the door on the Chicago Blackhawks to pave the way for Alexander Steen's deciding goal in an epic 4-3, triple-overtime Game 1 victory on Thursday night.

"It's not all about one period," Miller said. "I tried not to change my approach and it's nice to come out on the right side."

Steen scored 26 seconds into the third overtime to cap the longest playoff game in franchise history, beating Corey Crawford off a pair of short passes from Steve Ott and David Backes to end the marathon.

"I didn't know how open he was, obviously," Ott said. "He obviously buried it and the game's over. We stuck with it and we found a way to win it."

The next challenge is finding a way to recover on short rest, with Game 2 on Saturday afternoon. Blues defenseman Alex Pietrangelo logged 44 minutes, 8 seconds of ice time and two Blackhawks, Duncan Keith and Niklas Hjalmarsson, played more than 40 minutes.

Avalanche 5, Wild 4 (OT): Paul Stastny scored 7:27 into overtime after tying the game with 13.4 seconds remaining in regulation, lifting host Colorado over Minnesota in the opener of the Western Conference quarterfinals.

Gabriel Landeskog, Ryan O'Reilly and Jamie McGinn also added goals for Colorado in Patrick Roy's postseason debut behind the bench.

The Hall of Fame goaltender led the Avalanche to two Stanley Cup titles as a player.
Erik Haula, Charlie Coyle, Ryan Suter and Kyle

shot in overtime, the same type of play Stastny used to tie the game in regulation.

Rangers 4, Flyers 1: Brad Richards and Derek Stepan scored power-play goals 47 seconds apart in the third period, and host New York beat Philadelphia in the playoff opener to stretch its home-winning streak against rivals to nine games.

The teams were locked in a 1-1 tie when Jason Akesson — playing in just his third career NHL game — was given a double high-sticking penalty for clipping Rangers forward Carl Hagelin with 7:35 remaining.

Richards gave the Rangers their first lead of the night when a rebound of Martin St. Louis' shot came

to him, and he fired it in from the right circle, punctuating the moment with an emphatic fist pump at 8:22.

Richards and St. Louis hooked up again to help set up Stepan's insurance goal. New York worked the puck around the Philadelphia end, and Richards faked a drive. He instead sent a hard pass to Stepan for a shot into the open left side.

Sharks 6, Kings 3: Tomas Hertl and Raffi Torres both scored in their first game together as teammates and host San Jose jumped on top of Jonathan Quick and rival Los Angeles with a victory in its playoff opener.

Joe Thornton, Patrick Marleau and Marc-Edouard Vlasic also scored for the Sharks, who managed just 10 goals against Quick in losing a seven-game series to Los Angeles in the second round last year. Antti Niemi made 31 saves.

Quick allowed three goals in the first period for the first time in his playoff career, including two in the final minute as the Kings were completely outclassed.

Quick was replaced by Martin Jones after allowing five goals on 28 shots in two periods and only watched as the Kings showed life in the third period with goals from Jake Muzzin, Slava Voynov and Trevor Lewis.

Scoreboard

First round

(Best-of-seven)
if necessary
EASTERN CONFERENCE
Detroit vs. Boston

Friday: Boston at Boston
Tuesday: at Detroit
Thursday, April 24: at Detroit
Saturday, April 26: at Boston
Sunday, April 27: at Detroit
Monday, April 28: at Boston
Tuesday, April 29: Montreal 6, Tampa Bay 1
Wednesday, April 30: at Boston
Thursday, May 1: Montreal 6, Tampa Bay 0
Friday, May 2: Tampa Bay 4, OT
Saturday, May 3: Tampa Bay at Tampa Bay
Sunday, May 4: at Montreal
Monday, May 5: at Tampa Bay
Tuesday, May 6: Tampa Bay at Montreal
Wednesday, May 7: Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh
Thursday, May 8: Pittsburgh 4, Columbus 3
Friday, May 9: Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh
Saturday, May 10: Pittsburgh at Columbus
Sunday, May 11: Pittsburgh 3, N.Y. Rangers 1
Monday, May 12: Philadelphia 0, N.Y. Rangers 1
Tuesday, May 13: Philadelphia 1, Pittsburgh 0

1 Sunday: at N.Y. Rangers
Tuesday: at Philadelphia
Friday, April 25: at Philadelphia
Saturday, April 27: at Philadelphia
Sunday, April 28: Philadelphia 3, N.Y. Rangers 2
Monday, April 29: at Philadelphia
Tuesday, April 30: Philadelphia 2, N.Y. Rangers 1

WESTERN CONFERENCE
Colorado 1, Minnesota 9
Thursday, Colorado 5, Minnesota 4

Blues 4, Blackhawks 3 (3OT)

Chicago 3 0 0 0 0 0-4
St. Louis 2 0 1 0 0 1-3
First Period—1, St. Louis, Cracknell (Lapierre, Porter); 4:40, 2, Chicago, Oduya (T. Toews); 11:00, 1, Chicago, Seabrook (Versteeg, Leddy); 14:39 (pp), 1, St. Louis, Tarasenko (Shattenkrick, Jackman); 15:52, 5, Chicago, Kane (Toews, Seabrook); 16:00, 1, Chicago, Kane (Toews, Seabrook).
Third Period—6, St. Louis, Schwartz (Roy); 18:15.
Shootout—7, St. Louis, Steen (Ott, Backlund); 26.
Shots on Goal—Chicago 7-8-6-14-7-0-42, St. Louis 11-3-14-10-12-2-52.
Power-play opportunities—Chicago 1 of 6, St. Louis 1 of 1.
Goals by—Chicago, Crawford 0-10 (52 shots-48 saves), St. Louis, Miller 1-0 (40 shots-38 saves).
Penalty minutes—Chicago 19 (19:50), St. Louis 2-4:25.

Avalanche 5. Wild 4 (OT)

Minnesota

	1	2	0	0-4
Colorado	1	1	2	1-5

First Period: 1. Colorado, Landeskog
16:17; 2. Minnesota, McGinn 9:18.
Coyles 1 (Parise, Scandella), 15:20.

Second Period: 3. Minnesota, Suter 1:
13:15; 4. Minnesota, Brodzki 14:33.
O'Reilly 1 (MacKinnon, Barrie), 14:12. 5.
Minnesota, Haula 1 (Brodin), 16:08. 6.
Minnesota, Brodzki 17:07.
reiter), 18:12.

Third Period: 7. Colorado, McGinn
1:10. O'Reilly, 7:13. 8. Colorado, Stastny 1
Johnson, MacKinnon), 19:46.

Final Score: Colorado, Stastny 2;
(MacKinnon, Barrie), 7-27.

Shots on Goal—Minnesota 7-12-11.
Goalkeepers—Stastny, 10 saves.

Power-play opportunities—Minnesota
2 of 2; Colorado 0 of 4.

Penalties: 3. Minnesota, Bryzgalov 0-10
(31 shots-26 saves). Colorado, Varmioro
1-00 (33-29).

Audience: 18,007. T=3:02.

Sharks 6, Kings 3

Los Angeles 0 0 3-3
San Jose 2 2 1-6

First Period—1. San Jose, Thornton 1:1 (Pete Burns); 3:06, 2. San Jose, Burns 1:1 (Sheppard, Wiggins); 19:08, 3. San Jose, Marleau 1 (Nieto, Sheppard); 19:56.

Second Period—4. San Jose, Torres 1:1 (Nieto, Burns); 10:57, 5. San Jose, Vlasic 1 (Hertl, Couture); 16:29 (pp).

Third Period—6. Los Angeles, Muzzin 1:1 (Nieto, Burns); 1:00, 7. Los Angeles, 1:6, 8. Los Angeles, Lewis 1 (Carre, Rehger); 13:59, 9. San Jose, Burns 1 (19:05 en).

Shots on Goal—Los Angeles 8-10-16—34. San Jose 14-14-5—33.

Power-play opportunities—Los Angeles 1-0. San Jose 1 of 3.

Goalies—V. Ansharov, Quick 0-1-0 (28 shots-23 saves), Jones (0-0 third, 4-4). San Jose, Niemi 1-0-0 (34-31).

Thursday

Rangers 4, Flyers 1

Philadelphia 1 0 0-1
N.Y. Rangers 1 0 0-1
First Period—1, Philadelphia, MacDonald (1 Hartnell); 7:28, 2, N.Y. Rangers, Zuccarello (1 Pouliot, Staal), 10:53.
Third Period—3, N.Y. Rangers, Richards (1 St. Louis, Nash), 8:22 (pp.), 4, N.Y. Rangers, Stepan (1 Richards, St. Louis), 9:45, 5, N.Y. Rangers, Hagelin (1 Richards, Fast), 15:52.
Shots on Goal—Philadelphia 6-8-1=15. N.Y. Rangers 14-9-13=36.
Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia 0 of 1; N.Y. Rangers 2 of 6.
Goalies—Philadelphia, Emery 0-1-0 (36 shots—2 N.Y.s). N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 1-0-0 (15-14).
A—18,006 (18,006). T—2:25.

2014 playoff overtime goals

First Round
April 16 — Montreal 5, Tampa Bay 4, OT, Dale Weise, 18:08.
April 17 — St. Louis 4, Chicago 3, 3OT, Alexander Steen, 0:26.
April 17 — Colorado 5, Minnesota 4, OT, Paul Stastny, 7:27.

Playoff scoring leaders

	GP	G	A	PTS
Paul Stastny, Col	1	2	1	3
Brad Richards, NYR	1	1	2	3
Nathan MacKinnon, Col	1	0	3	3

25 tied with 2 pts.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AF

Philadelphia goalie Ray Emery watches a shot by the New York Rangers' Brad Richards get past him for a goal during the third period of Game 1 of the first-round playoff series Thursday in New York. The Rangers won the game 4-1.

NAB SCOREBOARD

American League					
East	W	L	Pct	GB	
New York	10	6	.625	—	
Toronto	9	8	.500	2	
Baltimore	7	7	.500	2	
Boston	7	9	.438	3	
Tampa Bay	7	9	.438	3	
Central Division					
Detroit	10	6	.583	—	
Minnesota	8	7	.533	½	
Chicago	8	8	.500	1	
Kansas City	7	7	.500	1	
Cleveland	7	8	.467	1½	
West Division					
Oakland	10	5	.667	—	
Texas	9	7	.563	½	
Los Angeles	7	8	.467	3	
Seattle	7	8	.467	3	
Houston	5	11	.313	5½	

National League					
East	W	L	Pct	GB	
Atlanta	10	7	.583	—	
Washington	9	7	.563	½	
Pittsburgh	8	7	.533	2	
Philadelphia	8	8	.500	2	
Miami	6	10	.375	4½	
Central Division					
Milwaukee	11	5	.688	—	
St. Louis	10	6	.625	—	
Cincinnati	8	8	.500	3	
Cincinnati	6	9	.400	4½	
Chicago	6	10	.375	4½	
West Division					
Los Angeles	10	6	.625	—	
San Francisco	10	6	.625	—	
Colorado	8	9	.471	2½	
San Diego	8	9	.471	2½	
Arizona	4	14	.222	7	

Thursday's Games					
Detroit 7, Cleveland 5					
Minnesota 3, Toronto 5, 1st game					
N.Y. Yankees 10, Tampa Bay 2					
Minnesota 3, Toronto 5, 2nd game					
St. Louis 3, Chicago White Sox 1					
Philadelphia 5, Houston 1					
Philadelphia 1, Atlanta 0					
L.A. Dodgers 2, San Francisco 1					
Colorado 3, San Diego 1					
Pittsburgh 11, Milwaukee 2					
St. Louis 4, Washington 0					

Friday's Games					
Toronto at Cleveland					
L.A. Angels at Detroit					
Atlanta at Boston					
N.Y. Yankees at Tampa Bay					
Chicago White Sox at Texas					
Minnesota at Kansas City					
Houston at Oakland					
Cincinnati at Chicago					
Milwaukee at Pittsburgh					
St. Louis at Washington					
Atlanta at N.Y. Mets					
Seattle at Miami					
San Francisco at San Diego					
Arizona at L.A. Dodgers					

Saturday's Games					
Toronto (Buerhle 3-0) at Cleveland					
(Kluber 1-1)					
L.A. Angels (C.Wilson 2-1) at Detroit					
(Carpenter 0-1)					
Baltimore (B.Norris 0-1) at Boston					
(Lindor 1-2)					
Minnesota (Correia 0-1) at Kansas City					
(B.Chen 0-1)					
Houston (Oberholzer 0-3) at Oakland					
(Kazmir 2-0)					
N.Y. Yankees (Nova 2-1) at Tampa Bay					
(Achter 1-1)					
St. Louis (Lynn 3-0) at Washington					
(Gormann 1-0)					
Cincinnati (Cingari 1-1) at Chicago					
(Vogelbein 2-2)					
Milwaukee (Garza 2-0) at Pittsburgh					
(Rodriguez 2-2)					
San Francisco (Hudson 2-0) at San Diego					
(Colon 1-2)					

Sunday's Games					
Toronto (Morrow 1-1) at Cleveland					
(Carrasco 0-2)					
San Francisco (H.Santiago 2-0) at Detroit					
(Porcello 1-1)					
N.Y. Yankees (Undecided) at Tampa Bay					
(C.Ramirez 0-1)					
Minnesota (Hughes 0-1) at Kansas City					
(Gutierrez 0-2)					
Chicago White Sox (Er.Johnson 0-1) at Texas					
(Ross Jr. 1-0)					
Los Angeles (Peacock 0-1) at Oakland					
(L.Chavez 0-2)					
San Francisco (Lincecum 0-1) at San Diego					
(Erasmus 1-2)					

Monday's Games					
St. Louis (Miller 1-2) at Washington					
(Cingari 1-1)					
Cincinnati (Bailey 0-1) at Chicago Cubs					
(Beckett 0-1)					
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(Beckett 0-1)					

MLB

AL roundup

Kinsler powers Tigers to win over Tribe

The Associated Press

DETROIT — Ian Kinsler homered and drove in four runs, and the Detroit Tigers held on for a 7-5 victory over the Cleveland Indians on Thursday.

Justin Verlander (2-1) allowed three unearned runs in five innings, and the Tigers trailed 3-1 before Kinsler's three-run homer in the fifth off Danny Salazar (0-2).

Detroit never gave up the lead after scoring four runs in the fifth, although Cleveland's Michael Brantley hit a two-run homer in the seventh to make it 6-5. Joe Nathan pitched a perfect ninth for his second save.

Rangers 8, Mariners 6: Kevin Kouzmanoff delivered again, doubling twice and scoring two runs as host Texas won its third straight after losing the series opener. Kouzmanoff is hitting .414 since being promoted from Triple-A on April 9 after starting third baseman Adrian Beltre strained his left quadriceps.

Shin-Soo Choo homered for Texas and J.P. Arenchibia had a pair of RBI groundouts. Robinson Cano hit his first homer for the Mariners, going back-to-back with Corey Hart. Cano is in a 3-for-18 slump.

Pedro Figueroa (2-1) earned his second victory in less than 24 hours. Joe Beimel (0-1) was the loser.

Yankees 10, Rays 2: CC Sabathia pitched seven innings for a rare win at Tropicana Field, leading New York past David Price and Tampa Bay in a matchup of former AL Cy Young Award winners.

Sabathia (2-2) allowed two runs and



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

The Tigers' Ian Kinsler connects for a two-run home run during the fifth inning of Thursday's game against the Cleveland Indians in Detroit.

seven hits, improving to 2-7 in 12 starts at Tropicana Field since joining the Yankees in 2009. He lowered his ERA to 5.19.

Price (2-1) entered 6-1 in nine starts against Sabathia but gave up six runs and 10 hits in five innings. Sean Rodriguez hit into a triple play and had a solo homer for the Rays, who have lost four straight.

Twins 7-9, Blue Jays 0-5: At Minneapolis, unfazed by the subfreezing temperature at first pitch, Kyle Gibson (3-0) allowed four

singles in a career-high eight scoreless innings in a day-night doubleheader opener.

At 31 degrees, Gibson took the mound for the coldest start for an outdoor game in Twins history.

Minnesota rallied for a victory and a sweep of the doubleheader when it scored three straight runs on wild pitches by the Blue Jays' Sergio Santos in the eighth inning of Game 2. The Twins walked eight times off three relievers in the frame.

Steve Delabar walked two batters starting the six-run eighth, setting up Santos (0-1) for trouble as manager John Gibbons called for his closer early. Santos walked all three batters he faced. Josmil Pinto came home on a wild pitch. Ball four by Santos to pinch-hitter Kurt Suzuki was wild, too, allowing Chris Herrmann to score and tie the game. Santos threw another wild pitch to Brian Dozier, and pinch-runner Pedro Florimon raced home for the lead.

Casey Fien (2-0) pitched a scoreless eighth for the victory.

Red Sox 3, White Sox 1: Jon Lester pitched eight sharp innings and David Ross hit a tiebreaking RBI double in Boston's two-run ninth, leading the Red Sox past host Chicago.

Lester (2-2) allowed one run and seven hits for his second straight win after opening the season with two losses. The left-hander struck out nine and walked none, winning an impressive pitcher's duel with White Sox ace Chris Sale.

Royals 5, Astros 1: James Shields struck out 12 in eight innings and visiting Kansas City completed a three-game sweep of Houston.

Shields (1-2) gave up one run and four hits, all singles. He struck out seven straight batters in the late innings.

Scott Feldman (2-1) yielded four earned runs and nine hits in six innings. It was the first tough outing for the Astros newcomer after he had allowed just one run and seven hits combined in his first three starts.

NL roundup

Dodgers avoid series sweep

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Hyun-Jin Ryu stretched his road scoreless streak to 26 innings, and the Los Angeles Dodgers beat the San Francisco Giants 2-1 Thursday to avoid a sweep.

Ryu (3-1) struck out three and walked one on a season-high 112 pitches in seven innings, helping his club move into a tie with the Giants atop the NL West at 10-6. Kenley Jansen gave up a two-out RBI single to Ehre Adriaenz before finishing for his fifth save.

Yasiel Puig returned to the Dodgers starting lineup and went 1-for-4 with a strikeout. He dropped a routine fly ball in right early on but recovered to throw out Brandon Belt at second. He then made a nice over-the-head catch on the next batter and a running grab in shallow center in the eighth with a runner on second.

Phillies 1, Braves 0: At Philadelphia, Ben Revere hit an RBI single with two outs in the eighth, and A.J. Burnett tossed three-hit ball over seven innings to outpitch Alex Wood (2-2). Atlanta's Julio Teheran beat Cliff Lee 1-0 less than 24 hours earlier.

Antonio Bastardo (2-1) worked the eighth and Jonathan Papelbon finished off the fourth-hitter with a perfect ninth for his fourth save.

Rockies 4, Padres 1: Franklin Morales (1-1) allowed four hits



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

Pittsburgh's Andrew McCutchen hit his first home run of the season in Thursday's 11-2 win over the Milwaukee Brewers.

in six innings and Wilin Rosario hit a tiebreaking groundout in a three-run seventh as visiting Colorado earned the win.

Ian Kennedy (1-2) took a one-hit shutout into the seventh before Corey Dickerson reached on a one-out double, Troy Tulowitzki walked and Justin Morneau lined a ball to right field. Chris Denorfia broke in, then retreated as the ball went over him for an RBI double.

Rosario grounded out to short-

stop as Tulowitzki scored for a 2-1 lead, and Nolan Arenado followed with a run-scoring single.

Cardinals 8, Nationals 0: Adam Wainwright (3-1) pitched his fourth career two-hitter and seventh shutout. He chipped in at the plate with a double and single, and St. Louis benefited from four errors in beating host Washington for the eighth straight time dating to Game 5 of the 2012 NL division series.

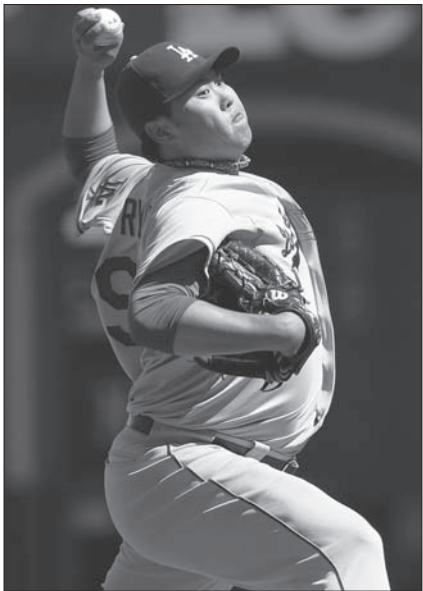
Wainwright allowed Ian Desmond's infield single in the second inning and Adam LaRoche's single to right in the ninth. He struck out eight and walked three.

Pirates 11, Brewers 2: At Pittsburgh, Andrew McCutchen hit his first homer of the season and drove in three runs. Pedro Alvarez had a three-run shot and pinch-hitter Josh Harrison broke a tie with a long ball in the seventh.

Harrison's two-run drive down the left-field line was the second of his career as a pinch hitter. It started Pittsburgh's nine-run outburst over the seventh and eighth innings that was capped by Alvarez's sixth of the year.

McCutchen, last year's NL MVP, hit a two-run homer in the first inning in his 57th at-bat.

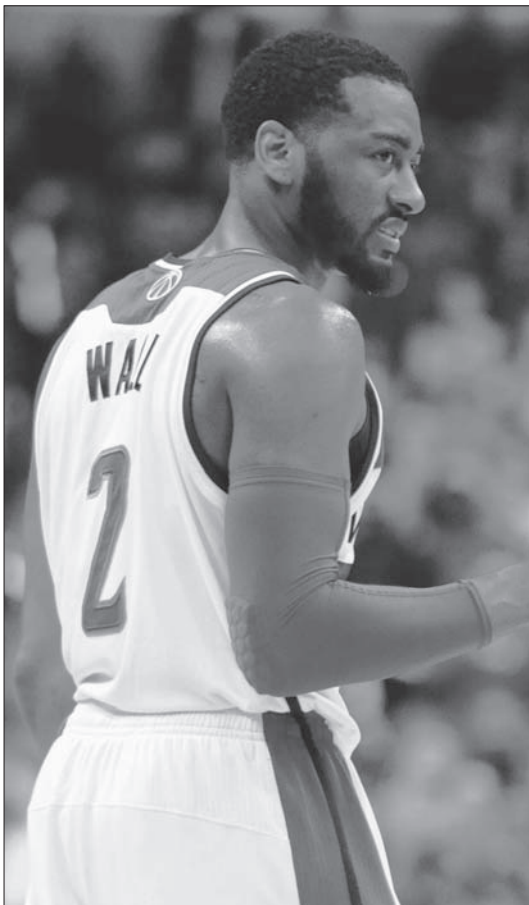
Milwaukee has lost three of four following a nine-game winning streak.



JEFF CHIU/AP

Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Hyun-jin Ryu, from South Korea, throws against the Giants during the seventh inning of Thursday's game in San Francisco. Ryu earned the victory as the Dodgers won 2-1 to avoid a series sweep.

NBA PLAYOFFS



MITCHELL LATTON/MCT

Wizards' Wall finally makes playoff debut

By JOSEPH WHITE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — John Wall talks as fast as he plays. That makes him entertaining to be around, even when the ball gets thrown out of bounds, or when the sentences come out a bit funky.

"It was a little different Brandon Knight without being there tonight," he rattled off after a recent game. In that same interview, he dished out a rapid-fire sentence that included something that sounded like "vengtest" — accidentally coining a new word that merges "vengeance" and "interest" and would probably make a good CD title.

"I think I'm just a fast talker," Wall said. "It's slowed down a little bit, but sometimes I still get back to those stages when I go real fast."

He's a blur on and off the court like few others in the NBA, but he's gradually learned how to control the speedometer since his reckless rookie days.

"You've got to slow down, you've got to smell the flowers a little," coach Randy Wittman said, remembering the 19-year-old who was chosen No. 1 overall from Kentucky in the 2010 draft.

This season, Wall committed more turnovers than anyone in the league, but he

also had the most assists. He's improved his jump shot, has a better veteran supporting cast and had an overdue healthy season that allowed him to play all 82 games.

The 23-year-old point guard motivated himself by writing "playoffs" on his shoes last fall. He's reached his goal, taking the Washington Wizards to the postseason for the first time since 2008.

"I learned how to slow down and change paces and things like that," said Wall, whose Game 1 debut comes Sunday night against the Chicago Bulls. "It takes time, getting healthy, learning from my coaches, me improving my game and watching a lot of film."

No one envies the mess that awaited Wall four years ago. The red carpet laid out for the post-draft festivities at the Verizon Center did little to mask the downward spiral of the final days of the Gilbert Arenas era. Wall was selected a captain from Day 1 — everyone now agrees that was probably a mistake — and he said he was surrounded by veterans who were more interested in playing for contracts and "not really trying to teach me anything."

While Wall learned this way around, the Wizards slowly improved the rest of the roster. Getting Bradley Beal at No. 3 overall in 2012 was a huge step. Trevor Ariza, Nene and Marcin Gortat have been invaluable pickups. And, this year, Wall has also been steadied by Wittman's "AARP group" of Al Harrington, Drew Gooden and Andre Miller.

By the numbers

19.3 **8.8** **295**

Points per game
Wizards point guard
John Wall averaged
this season.

Assists per game Wall
averaged this season,
tops in the league.

Number of turnovers
Wall has committed
this season, also
tops in the league.

SOURCE: NBA.com

Washington guard John Wall was the No. 1 draft pick out of Kentucky in 2010.

Clippers-Warriors series billed as must-see TV

By ANTONIO GONZALEZ
The Associated Press

OAKLAND, California — Forget the Showtime Lakers or the Sacramento Kings of past decades.

There's a flashy brand of basketball being played by a new pair of rising California rivals. The alley-oops in Lob City, the deep three-pointers by the so-called Splash Brothers, and the overall bitterness between the Los Angeles Clippers and Golden State Warriors should make for one of the most entertaining matchups in the first round of the NBA playoffs.

The Clippers — Lob City — host Game 1 on Saturday, and whether the high-octane style and three-point prowess both teams possess can carry either to a championship — this year or in the future — remains to be seen.

Those Kings teams, dubbed "The Greatest Show on Court" on a 2001 Sports Il-

lustrated cover, never even made the NBA Finals. Neither did the high-scoring Phoenix Suns with two-time MVP Steve Nash at the point. The "Run TMC" Warriors under Don Nelson never reached the conference finals.

In an age when the pace typically slows down in the playoffs and offenses get bunched in half-court sets, the Clippers and Warriors are trying to speed it up and spread it out.

"They hate each other," Reggie Miller, TV analyst, said. "It will be a fun matchup," Clippers guard Jamal Crawford said. "It's two teams who are both exciting and both love to get up and down the court."

The high-flying frontcourt of Blake Griffin and DeAndre Jordan, coupled with point guard Chris Paul and three-point shooters all over the roster make the Clip-

pers a fan-pleasing spectacle. Los Angeles led the NBA in scoring this season, averaging 107.9 points per game.

The quick-shooting Splash Brothers, Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson for Golden State, are as dangerous a scoring tandem as the league has ever seen. They combined to make 484 three-pointers this season — eclipsing their NBA record of 483 set last season — and showed in the playoffs a year ago how tough they are to cover when they're going.

"The greatest shooting backcourt in NBA history," Warriors coach Mark Jackson has repeatedly labeled them.

What both coaches believe separates their teams — and often gets lost in the shoot-first-and-shoot-offen approach — is the importance they place on defense.

The Warriors held opponents to 43.6 percent shooting, tied with Oklahoma City for third-best in the league — though Golden State's defense could be hampered with

center Andrew Bogut out with a broken right rib. Opponents shot 44.1 percent against the Clippers, ranking fifth.

The Clippers and Warriors also have something rare these days: Real animosity that could fuel physical play.

"They hate one another," said former Indiana Pacers guard and current TV analyst Reggie Miller.

The last major squabble came in Golden State's win on Christmas Day in Oakland, where Griffin and Warriors reserve Draymond Green were ejected and Bogut had dust-ups with Griffin and Paul. This season, the Clippers even refused to hold pregame chapel with the Warriors in Los Angeles — something every other team does in the league.

The teams have been in the Pacific Division since 1978, when the Clippers played in San Diego. They have never met in the playoffs — until now.

NBA PLAYOFFS

Eastern Conference capsules



Pacers vs. Hawks

Records: Indiana 56-26 (Home: 35-6; Road: 21-20), Atlanta 35-44 (Home: 24-17; Road: 14-27).

Season series: Tied, 2-2.
Key stat: Indiana ranked second in the NBA by giving up only 92.3 PPG.

Outlook: Atlanta is a tough matchup for the Pacers because of its ability to space the floor with three-point shooters Kyle Korver, DeMarre Carroll, Lou Williams and Jeff Teague. The Hawks beat Indiana by 19 points on the road in the teams' last meeting.

Prediction: Let's not get too carried away just because Indiana stumbled into the playoffs. The Pacers are still vastly superior to a sub-.500 team, even if they were one themselves in recent weeks. Pacers in five.



Heat vs. Bobcats

Records: Miami 54-28 (Home: 32-9; Road: 22-19), Charlotte 43-39 (Home: 25-16; Road: 18-23).

Season series: Miami, 4-0.
Key stat: The Heat ranked fifth in the league in offensive efficiency, scoring 110.3 points per 100 possessions, despite ranking 12th in points per game (102.2), largely because they made a league-leading 50.1 percent of their shots.

Outlook: The Bobcats are a warm and snuggly sort, making the playoffs only two years removed from a seven-win season. Credit the arrival of coach Steve Clifford and bearded power forward James Johnson, who has given Charlotte a valuable inside presence. Meanwhile, the two top-scoring players, Dwight Howard and Dwyane Wade, are almost back to full strength with the return of Dwyane Wade and Greg Oden.

Prediction: Miami's three-peat bid gets off to a start that's as easy as one, two, three, four. Heat in four.



Raptors vs. Nets

Records: Toronto 48-34 (Home: 26-15; Road: 22-19), Brooklyn 44-38 (Home: 28-13; Road: 16-25).

Season series: Tied, 2-2.
Key stat: Brooklyn's Kevin Garnett, Paul Pierce, Joe Johnson and Deron Williams have combined 387 games of playoff experience compared with 24 for the Raptors' starters.

Outlook: Everyone expected Brooklyn to be here after acquiring Pierce and Garnett last summer. Few thought Toronto to be after trading star Rudy Gay to the Nets. But a makeshift young backcourt by DeMar DeRozan and Kyle Lowry have put the Raptors back in the playoffs for the first time since 2008.

Prediction: The Nets' vets have been the best in the NBA too many times to let the Raptors upstage them. Nets in six.



Bulls vs. Wizards

Records: Chicago 48-34 (Home: 27-14; Road: 21-20), Washington 44-38 (Home: 22-19; Road: 22-19).

Season series: Washington, 2-1.
Key stat: Chicago's defense is again the best in the NBA, with only 91.8 points per game.

Outlook: The Bulls persevered after losing Derrick Rose to another knee injury early in the season and watching Luol Deng leave in trade. They still clinched homecourt in the first round against the emerging Wizards, who feature the league's most dynamic young backcourt with John Wall and Bradley Beal.

Prediction: Chicago's backcourt Tom Thibodeau's shrewd in-game adjustments will be among the factors that X out the Wizards. Bulls in six.



SUE OROCK/AP

Thunder forward Kevin Durant will lead his team against Memphis when the NBA playoffs begin Saturday.

Return:
Heat not
as strong
this year

FROM BACK PAGE

It begins on Saturday with four games: The Top-seeded Indiana Pacers host the Atlanta Hawks, and the Brooklyn Nets visit the Toronto Raptors in the Eastern Conference, while the West series openers include the Golden State Warriors at the Los Angeles Clippers, and the Oklahoma City Thunder against the Memphis Grizzlies.

On Sunday, No. 1 overall seed San Antonio opens against the Dallas Mavericks, right before Miami welcomes the Charlotte Bobcats. Washington at Chicago, and Houston hosting Portland round out the action.

The Finals came to a thrilling conclusion last year, with the Heat rallying from a five-point deficit in the last 28 seconds of regulation to win Game 6. They went on to take a tight Game 7, helped when Tim Duncan missed over Battier from point-blank range, as San Antonio fell to its first loss in five NBA Finals appearances.

Many thought that was the last chance for the Spurs' core of Duncan, Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili. Instead, San Antonio won a league-high 62 games in perhaps the franchise's finest all-around season.

Even the Spurs are impressed with the way they left disappointment behind, but all that matters now is what's ahead.

"We are No. 1 overall and can't be better than that. But it doesn't mean anything," Ginobili said. "The playoffs start from

Schedule

Eastern Conference

FIRST ROUND
(Best-of-seven)
(x-if necessary)
Indiana vs. Atlanta
Saturday, April 19: at Indiana
Tuesday, April 22: at Atlanta
Thursday, April 24: at Atlanta
Saturday, April 26: at Atlanta
Monday, April 28: at Indiana
Wednesday, May 1: at Atlanta
Friday, May 3: at Indiana
Sunday, May 4: at Charlotte
Tuesday, April 22: at Miami
Thursday, April 24: at Charlotte
Saturday, April 26: at Miami
Monday, April 28: at Charlotte
Wednesday, April 30: at Miami
Friday, May 2: at Charlotte
Sunday, May 4: at Miami
Tuesday, April 22: at Toronto
Thursday, April 24: at Brooklyn
Saturday, April 26: at Brooklyn
Monday, April 28: at Toronto
Wednesday, April 30: at Toronto
Friday, May 2: at Washington
Sunday, May 4: at Chicago
Tuesday, April 22: at Chicago
Thursday, April 24: at Washington
Saturday, April 26: at Washington
Monday, April 28: at Chicago
Wednesday, April 30: at Chicago
Friday, May 2: at Chicago
Sunday, May 4: at Chicago

scratch."

And it starts against a Dallas team the Spurs have beaten nine straight times.

"Eventually," Dallas star Dirk Nowitzki said, "we will win one."

Miami lost 14 of its final 25 games, often while playing without Dwyane Wade, and finished two games behind the Pacers. Former NBA coach Jeff Van Gundy picks Indiana to win the East, in part because the Heat aren't as intimidating as they were a year ago.

"They have a lot of guys who are not in their prime right now and their ability to consistently play well individually is just not there," Van Gundy said on Thursday during a conference call. "If they didn't have some of those health issues, they'd be the favorite."

If another Spurs-Heat finals happen again, San Antonio would get the decisive game at home this time — though that may not even come into play if the Spurs have to face either the Rockets or Thunder, who both went 4-0 against them.

Western Conference

FIRST ROUND
(Best-of-seven)
(x-if necessary)
San Antonio vs. Dallas
Saturday, April 19: at San Antonio
Tuesday, April 22: at San Antonio
Thursday, April 24: at Dallas
Saturday, April 26: at Dallas
Monday, April 28: at San Antonio
Wednesday, May 1: at Dallas
Friday, May 3: at Dallas
Sunday, May 4: at San Antonio
Tuesday, April 22: at Oklahoma City
Thursday, April 24: at Oklahoma City
Saturday, April 26: at Oklahoma City
Monday, April 28: at Oklahoma City
Wednesday, April 30: at Memphis
Friday, May 2: at Memphis
Sunday, May 4: at Oklahoma City
Tuesday, April 22: at L.A. Clippers
Thursday, April 24: at L.A. Clippers
Saturday, April 26: at L.A. Clippers
Monday, April 28: at Golden State
Wednesday, April 30: at Golden State
Friday, May 2: at Portland
Sunday, May 4: at Houston
Tuesday, April 22: at Houston
Thursday, April 24: at Houston
Saturday, April 26: at Portland
Monday, April 28: at Houston
Wednesday, April 30: at Houston
Friday, May 2: at Portland
Sunday, May 4: at Houston

Every series in the West could be a slugfest, which would make the playoffs no different than the regular season. The East has a sub-.500 Atlanta team along with postseason novices such as Charlotte and Washington, potentially making things easier for the Heat and Pacers.

But Toronto, Chicago and Brooklyn all compiled better records since Jan. 1 than Indiana and Miami, and will try to prevent the Eastern Conference finals matchup that's been expected since November.

The Spurs have been hoping for another finals shot ever since walking off the court in Miami where they were so close to victory in Game 6 that workers had already begun preparations for the celebration.

"We could have easily fell in a hole and let last year's loss kill us," Spurs forward Kawhi Leonard said. "But we got back mentally together and trying to get the same goal accomplished."

AP Sports Writers Tim Reynolds in Miami, Tom Withers in Cleveland, and freelance writer Ram Dominguez in San Antonio contributed to this report.

Western Conference capsules



Spurs vs. Mavericks

Records: San Antonio 62-20 (Home: 32-8; Road: 30-12), Dallas 49-33 (Home: 26-15; Road: 23-18).

Season series: San Antonio, 4-0.
Key stat: The Spurs' legendary ball movement can be seen in their league-leading 25.1 assists per game.

Outlook: San Antonio is probably glad Dallas lost on the final day of the regular season, slotting the Mavericks into the series instead of more dangerous Memphis. Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki and Monta Ellis are tremendous shot-makers, but the Mavs are below average defensively and sport four starters age 32 or older.

Prediction: This should be a relatively stress-free series for San Antonio, though Spurs Coach Gregg Popovich probably will find something to complain about. Spurs in five.



Thunder vs. Grizzlies

Records: Oklahoma City 59-23 (Home: 34-7; Road: 25-16), Memphis 50-32 (Home: 27-19; Road: 23-18).

Season series: Oklahoma City, 3-1.
Key stat: Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant never seems to have an off night, scoring at least 25 points in 46 of his last 47 games.

Outlook: Oklahoma City should give thanks in its pregame prayer for Russell Westbrook, whose absence doomed the Thunder last season in the conference semifinals against the Grizzlies. Having Westbrook around should mean they have to carry his team on his shoulders.

Prediction: The Grizzlies' nice run the last few months will grit and grind its way to a quick halt. Thunder in five.



Clippers vs. Warriors

Records: Los Angeles 57-25 (Home: 34-7; Road: 23-18), Golden State 51-31 (Home: 27-14; Road: 24-17).

Season series: Tied, 2-2.
Key stat: The Clippers led the NBA in three-point defense, holding teams to 33.2 percent shooting from beyond the arc. That could come in handy against the Warriors, who made 774 three-pointers, second-most in the league, and shot 38 percent from distance.

Outlook: Andre Bogue's rib fracture could sideline him for the duration of the playoffs, forcing the Warriors to go without their third-leading scorer, Jermaine O'Neal, in the court. This means the Clippers will have to call plays for center DeAndre Jordan for the first time all season.

Prediction: The Splash Brothers duo of Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson won't be able to keep Golden State from going kerplunk against a deeper and hungrier team. Clippers in six.



Rockets vs. Trail Blazers

Records: Houston 54-28 (Home: 33-8; Road: 21-20), Portland 54-28 (Home: 31-10; Road: 23-18).

Season series: Houston, 3-1.
Key stat: Houston ranks 12th in points allowed (103.4) a game and Portland is 22nd (102.6).

Outlook: Both teams have plenty to prove. Houston's Dwight Howard hasn't made it past the first round since 2010 and Portland wants to show it wasn't a two-month wonder after losing to the season with a league-best 24-5 record.

Prediction: The phrase "James Harden driving to the hoop" will appear more than any other in the play-by-play accounts of this series. Rockets in six.

Ben Bolch, The Los Angeles Times

SPORTS

NBA PLAYOFFS

Return bout?

San Antonio will have to survive West for 2nd shot at Heat

BY BRIAN MAHONEY
The Associated Press

To get another shot at LeBron James, the San Antonio Spurs may have to go through Dirk Nowitzki, then Dwight Howard and James Harden, and finally Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook.

Survive all that, and maybe they can avenge last year's NBA Finals heartbreak.

"There's definitely that burning desire in the back of your mind that really wants to get back there," Spurs guard Patty Mills said.

They get started on Sunday, right before James and the Miami Heat begin what they hope is a run to a third straight championship. Miami's path seems much easier, but James' team also appears more vulnerable than the one that was an overwhelming favorite in last year's playoffs.

Maybe that was boredom, though. Count on the Heat to pick it up now.

"This is why we're all here," Heat forward Shane Battier said. "The regular season is great and all, but this is the fun part. You wake up and you're excited for the challenge of the playoffs."

SEE
RETURN
ON PAGE 31

In this June 13, 2013 file photo, Miami's LeBron James passes between San Antonio's Boris Diaw, left, and Manu Ginobili during the second half of Game 4 in last season's NBA Finals in San Antonio. A rematch of last year's thrilling NBA Finals finish is possible, but the Spurs and Heat both have to tread difficult paths to get there.

ERIC GAY/AP

Could Wallace Jr. be crossover star NASCAR needs? | Page 26

Blues outlast Blackhawks in 3OT for Game 1 win | Page 27

Kinsler drives in four runs as Tigers top Indians | Page 29